Play on Display: Tracing Encounters with Cornelia Hahn Oberlander's Expo 67 Playground

Gabrielle Doiron

A Thesis
in
The Department
of
Art History

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Degree of Master of Arts (Art History) at
Concordia University
Montreal, Quebec, Canada

April 2017

CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY
School of Graduate Studies

This is to certify that the thesis prepared

By: Gabrielle Doiron

Entitled: Play on Display: Tracing Encounters with Cornelia Hahn Oberlander's Expo 67 Playground

and submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts (Art History)

complies with the regulations of the University and meets the accepted standards with respect to originality and quality.

Signed by the final Examining Committee:

_____ Chair

_____ Examiner
Dr. Johanne Sloan

_____ Examiner
Dr. Elaine Cheasley Paterson

_____ Supervisor
Dr. Cynthia Hammond

Approved by:

_____
Dr. Kristina Huneault, Graduate Program Director

_____
Dr. Rebecca Taylor Duclos, Dean of Faculty of Fine Arts

Date: _____

ABSTRACT

Play on Display: Tracing Encounters with
Cornelia Hahn Oberlander's Expo 67 Playground

Gabrielle Doiron

In mid-century North America, increasing interest in the designed environment, widespread acceptance of child-centered pedagogy, and a growing generation of baby boomers resulted in a dynamic period of material production for children, as well as a changing landscape of public playspaces. This was evident at Expo 67 in Montreal, where the Canadian government put a playground and the visiting children within it on display. Designed by landscape architect Cornelia Hahn Oberlander, this playground was meant to serve as a model for playspaces in Canada. Drawing from the adventure playground model popular in postwar Denmark and the U.K., as well as her training in modern landscape architecture, Hahn Oberlander designed a natural environment with loose parts as an antidote to the "concrete and asphalt jungle effect" of the city child's living environment. This thesis traces the design and conceptual development of the playground, clarifying Hahn Oberlander's vision. It also considers the implications of the playground's role as an exhibition by discussing its reception. It concludes by comparing the intended use and reception of the playground with its actual use, featuring first-hand accounts of playground supervisors and children who played there. Describing how gender factored into the experiences of children in the playground, as well as how children's play was framed by journalists, this thesis demonstrates that, despite efforts to make it such, the playground was not a gender-neutral space.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

None of this would have been possible without the continued support and mentorship of my supervisor, Dr. Cynthia Hammond. Her academic rigour and positive encouragement are contagious and have made me a better scholar. I am forever grateful to Cynthia for her generosity in sharing her knowledge and resources with me, and most importantly for introducing me to Cornelia Hahn Oberlander's oeuvre. Leading by example, Dr. Hammond has taught me to trust my instincts and to find my voice in my writing. I am also indebted to Dr. Johanne Sloan, whose thoughtful comments both at the time of my thesis presentation and as part of my final revisions were immensely constructive.

I deeply grateful to Cornelia Hahn Oberlander, whose oeuvre and attention to children's experiences in space are constant sources of inspiration for me. I would also like to thank my interviewees Hedwige Asselin, Virgina Burt, and Sandy Hill, whose insight into Expo 67 greatly enriched my analysis. Youki Cropas and Leisure Projects (Meredith Carruthers and Susannah Wesley) also enriched my research experience, kindly sharing resources based on their mutual interests in Hahn Oberlander's playground designs. At the Canadian Centre for Architecture, Mathieu Pomerleau and Colin MacWhirter's patience, kindness, and interest made my archival research not only productive but also extremely enjoyable.

Integral to the development of my thesis were several scholars in Concordia's Department of Art History, most notably Dr. Nicola Pezolet, Dr. John Potvin, and Dr. Heather Igloliorte, whose courses and scholarship shaped my methodological approach considerably. I would also like to acknowledge graduate program directors Dr. Alice Jim and Dr. Kristina Huneault, whose continued support and enthusiasm made my graduate experience all the more positive. Thank you to Dina Vescio and Anna Waclawek for their hard work and assistance as well.

I am indebted to the emotional support of my family and close friends. Thank you especially to my mother, Francine, whose values, nurturing, and encouragement of my artistic sensibilities as a child were integral to my interest in creative education today. Thank you to my father, Daniel, for his selflessness and patience. Thank you to my brother, Charles, who introduced me to the importance of design in everyday life. Thank you to Estelle, my dear colleague and friend, whose ceaseless generosity and emotional support in light and dark gave me strength when I needed it most.

Thank you to my friend Leona Nikolić for her patience, encouragement, and sense of humour. A special mention goes to Banana, whose sweet, loving energy was such blissful accompaniment during my thesis research and writing. Thank you as well to my friends at Le lion et la souris, including my playwork mentor and friend Megan Cohoe-Kenney and all the spirited children in Adventure Club, whose playfulness nourished me and offered a necessary and energizing break from academic work.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

INTRODUCTION

As I write this thesis in 2017, Montreal is preparing various commemorative events, from presentations of Expo 67 fashions to contemporary artists' responses, to celebrate the semi-centennial anniversary of Expo 67.[1] Taking place in the summer of 1967 on the islands of Sainte-Hélène and Notre-Dame in Montréal, Canada, Expo 67 was an international world's fair oriented around the theme "Man and His World."[2] The exhibition housed national pavilions representing 70 nations, as well as private corporate pavilions.[3] Conceived as a "total environment," Expo 67's architecture, hostess uniforms, branding, and screens were integrated as part of a designed whole.[4] Part of the cohesiveness of Expo 67 was due to its modernist execution. As Rhona Richman Kenneally and Johanne Sloan note, "modernism itself became a lingua franca at Expo 67."[5] As one visitor to Expo 67 recalls, "Everything was so modern that even the state-of-the-art forklift trucks that picked up the refuse would draw staring crowds."[6] It is in this context that German-born, Canadian landscape architect Cornelia Hahn Oberlander (b. 1921) designed a children's playground as part of the Canada Pavilion's Children' Creative Centre (CCC).

Although "Man" was the orienting figure of Expo 67 – the supposedly neutral, universal identity to represent all humans – the fair privileged children and youth, too. In addition to the representation of children in films such as Art Kane's *A Time to Play*, shown at the U.S. Pavilion, Expo 67 provided a number of pavilions and services for the entertainment and care of children.[7] Most expansive of these was Children's World at La Ronde, an area replete with amusement park

---

[1] For instance, the McCord Museum is preparing its exhibition *Fashioning Expo 67* and the Montreal Museum of Contemporary Art is preparing its exhibition *In Search of Expo 67*. These are two of many exhibitions planned for the semi-centennial anniversary in Montreal.

[2] See figure 1 for the official map of the Expo 67 site, ca. 1967.

[3] Among these private corporate pavilions were the Kodak, Canadian Pacific-Cominco, Kaleidoscope, Air Canada, and the Telephone pavilions.

[4] Gagnon and Marchessault discuss this notion of the total environment in their introduction to *Reimagining Cinema: Film at Expo 67* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2014). It is also the subject of Donald Theall's chapter "Expo 67 as Total Environment" in the same book, 16-24.

[5] Rhona Richman Kenneally and Johanne Sloan, "Introduction: Dusting off the Souvenir," in *Expo 67: Not Just a Souvenir* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 11.

[6] Tu Thanh Ha, "Expo 67 saw 'the world coming to us, in a joyous fashion,'" *The Globe and Mail*, April 26, 2007, p. A3.

[7] Frederika Eilers describes these extensively these in her thesis "Man in His World, Children in Theirs: Material Culture at Expo '67," M.Arch Thesis (McGill University, 2010),

rides, scaled down for children aged 4-9 years, as well as puppet shows, play areas, toy shops, and food stands (figs. 2-3). There was also the Vienna Kindergarten, an experimental preschool program staffed by Austrian multilingual preschool educators (figs. 4-5). Even without these child-centred spaces, the entire site of Expo 67 could be read as a playground for children. As figures 6 and 7 demonstrate, some children even climbed and touched the artworks on the site as though they were playground features. If one considers the sheer amount of entertainment and play for adults at Expo 67, there is a sense in which the entire site was a playground for them, too.[8]

Amidst the extensive scholarship on various aspects of Expo 67, Hahn Oberlander's playground has not gone unnoticed.[9] To date, students and scholars have considered her design in various contexts. In his book, *For Canada's Sake: Public Religion, Centennial Celebrations, and the Re-making of Canada in the 1960s* (2005), Gary Miedema argues that the playground echoed the Canada Pavilion's overall message of being "still-in-development."[10] Susan Herrington describes the playground in her book, Cornelia Hahn Oberlander: Making the Modern Landscape (2014), situating it as a catalyst for Hahn Oberlander's subsequent involvement with playground reform throughout Canada.[11] In her M.Arch thesis, "Man in His World, Children in Theirs: Material Culture at Expo '67" (2010), Frederika Eilers discusses the effects of putting children on display at Expo 67, arguing that the separation between adult and child we see in the playground helped to uphold the myth of childhood.[12] Meanwhile, Youki Cropas's post-professional M.Arch report "(Re)Imagining Children's Landscapes: The Social Architecture of Cornelia Hahn Oberlander" (2016) is an in-depth analysis of the playground's design, testing its

[8] I credit Johanne Sloan for this comparison of the Expo 67 site to a playground for adults, from a comment she made during my thesis presentation in November 2016.

[9] While the majority of scholarship refers to Cornelia Hahn Oberlander as "Oberlander," I am choosing to refer to her as "Hahn Oberlander" throughout this thesis, as Hahn is her maiden name.

[10] Gary Miedema, *For Canada's Sake: Public Religion, Centennial Celebrations, and the Re-making of Canada in the 1960s* (Montreal; Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2005), 121-122.

[11] Susan Herrington, *Cornelia Hahn Oberlander: Making the Modern Landscape* (Charlottesville & London: University of Virginia Press, 2014), 109.

[12] Frederika Eilers, "Man in His World, Children in Theirs: Material Culture at Expo ' 67," M.Arch Thesis (McGill University, 2010), 79.

potential as a model for contemporary playground design. These works offer important insight and rigorous research, to which this project is indebted.

This thesis distinguishes itself from these prior engagements in two important ways, however. First, it engages with sources previously unexamined – namely, documents concerning the CCC at Library and Archives Canada and images archived at the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation library. These primary sources clarify the role of Polly Hill, Project Director at the CCC, in the development of the playground and substantiate some of the public's interest in the playground during and after Expo 67. Second, this thesis stresses the impact of gendered experiences within and outside of the playground's limits. In so doing, it forms a dialogue between pre-existing theorizations of children's gendered experiences and empirical data from the playground, discussing resonances and discrepancies between the CCC's intended and actual use. While Polly Hill envisioned the centre as a gender-neutral, equal-opportunity space for girls and boys, I ask how the gendered substructure of Expo 67 marked children's experiences. The scholarship of Owain Jones and Lia Karsten, who consider, respectively, the maleness of idyllic childhood and children's encounters with gendered territory, offers indispensable frameworks for my analysis.

Because of what I encountered throughout my research, gender appears in this thesis in another capacity: with regard to women inhabiting the professional sphere. Archived correspondence of Hahn Oberlander and Hill's communications with one another and various professionals alike point to the unique gendered experiences of women. To enrich my understanding of these negotiations, I consider women's place within architecture in the period in which Hahn Oberlander was working. As Annmarie Adams and Peta Tancred's book *Designing Women: Gender and the Architectural Profession* (2000) demonstrates, large-scale modern architecture projects in 1960s and 70s, within and outside of Expo 67, gave women architects unprecedented opportunities for work. Since Hahn Oberlander is considered a modern landscape architect, it is worthwhile briefly touching upon the relationship of women in landscape architecture to modernism.

As Sonja Duempelmann, John Beardsley, and Thaisa Way have expressed, landscape architecture has often been coded feminine, in part because of its association with gardens and

the home, as well as how the female body has been identified with nature.[13] Meanwhile, modernism is typically coded masculine, not necessarily because of who practiced it, but rather because of its rejection of ornament and its patriarchal proponents.[14] In fact, landscape architecture's modernist turn after the Second World War created challenges for women's participation in the discipline.[15] According to Susan Herrington, modern design's ties to critical reasoning and its predilection for heroic tropes, among other things, worked against women's participation in the field. Against these odds, Hahn Oberlander not only embraced modernism in her work, but also did so extremely successfully and prolifically. The recipient of the Order of Canada (1990) and the Canadian Society of Landscape Architects' inaugural Governor General's Medal in Landscape Architecture (2016), Hahn Oberlander has designed numerous landscape projects, from playgrounds to Robson Square Gardens in Vancouver. All the while, she raised a family, having had three children with her husband Peter Oberlander. As Herrington notes about Hahn Oberlander, "Like three generations of women before her, contributing to society, while also having a family, was a given."[16]

This thesis builds upon the careful scholarship of feminist architectural historians. Susan Herrington, Thaisa Way, and Sherry Ahrentzen offer useful models for writing about women's work in architecture, emphasizing approaches that weave together empirical data with theory and that are sensitive to the constellations of people involved with each project. Like Herrington and Way, I endeavour to identify some of the many stars in Hahn Oberlander's constellation for her Expo 67 playground, emphasizing the roles of various professionals and non-professionals as I trace the significance of her design. Following Ahrentzen's practice of "bricolage," my thesis puts lived experience in dialogue with theorizations of gender and

---

[13] Sonja Duempelmann, and John Beardsley, "Introduction," in *Women, Modernity, and Landscape architecture* (London: Routledge, 2015), 7. Thaisa Way further explains this relationship in *Unbounded Practice: Women and Landscape Architecture in the Early Twentieth Century* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2009).

[14] Doreen Massey discusses this in "Flexible Sexism," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 9 (1991): 31–57. For insight into the patriarchal language of modernist architural theory, see also Adolf Loos, *Ornament and Crime: Selected Essays*, trans. Adolf Opel (Riverside, Calif: Ariadne Press, 1998).

[15] Susan Herrington, "Cornelia Hahn Oberlander: A Model Modern," in *Women, Modernity, and Landscape architecture*, ed. by Sonja Duempelmann and John Beardsley (London: Routledge, 2015), 185.

[16] Ibid., 190.

architecture, allowing one to enrich the other.[17] My engagement with feminist and queer theory has also informed how I encountered images and stories of children playing in the playground, while my close study of this empirical data offers salient examples through which I can test these theories.[18]

An important starting point for my research was Amy F. Ogata's *Designing the Creative Child: Playthings and Places in Midcentury America* (2013), which introduced me to the postwar phenomenon of "the creative child." Simply put, the creative child was the construction and "dream" of adults, a commodity and ideal that represented postwar efforts to make competent adults out of the baby boomer generation.[19] As Ogata notes, "to encourage a healthy personality and a democratic culture, experts urged postwar parents to allow children more personal freedom, to moderate their attitudes toward discipline, and to provide toys and amusements that would enhance children's cognitive and social development."[20] As a thorough exploration of material culture emerging from the American doctrine of the creative child, the book illuminates ways in which children were (and continue to be) mythologized and clarifies how adults have negotiated their ambitions and ideals in designing for children. She even mentions the Children's Creative Centre in passing, it being her only direct reference to the existence of the phenomenon of the creative child in Canada. Ogata's book also introduced me to the scholarship of Abigail Van Slyck, whose analysis of American summer camps offers a useful model for my own research, particularly in how she considers the legacy of settler-colonialism in child-centered spaces and engages with the notion of a manufactured wilderness.[21]

While the aforementioned works demonstrate a marked interest in discussing spaces of childhood, there is no question that playgrounds continue to occupy a marginal status in

---

[17] Sherry Ahrentzen, "The Space between the Studs: Feminism and Architecture" *Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 29.1 (2003): 200. Simply put, bricolage is the practice of putting everyday, lived experiences (empirical data) in dialogue with theory.

[18] Sara Ahmed's *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2006) especially influenced how I conceived of children's encounters with the playground.

[19] Amy F. Ogata, *Designing the Creative Child: Playthings and Places in Midcentury America* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013), 187.

[20] Ibid., 5.

[21] Abigail Ayres Van Slyck, *A Manufactured Wilderness: Summer Camps and the Shaping of American Youth*, 1890-1960 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006).

architectural discourse. This thesis has as one of its aims to encourage critical engagement with how adults imagine and inhabit children's spaces. Divided in three chapters, this thesis loosely addresses Hahn Oberlander's playground's design, reception, and use. The first chapter, "Designing a Part of Nature: The Playground as Landscape," examines the playground's formal elements and clarifies its conceptual framework. It identifies Hahn Oberlander and Hill's ambitions in developing the playground and lays out in volumetric space the lines and textures of Hahn Oberlander's design. The second chapter, "Gazing at Expo 67's Children: Grown-Up Responses to the Playground," takes up the subject of the playground's reception, paying special attention to images of the CCC in news media. The final chapter, "Chance Encounters: Playing with Gendered Territory" identifies individualized and shared experiences within the playground, echoing and resisting adults' impressions discussed in the previous chapter. While these three chapters are useful organizational categories, their boundaries are not so clearly defined. Much like the sand in the nursery play area's sandbox, various notions of design, reception, and use spill from one chapter to the next, resulting in a playful grittiness throughout. After all, the bricolage in writing this thesis, much like an adventure playground, has been marked by a messy process. Just as "children make their own order out of chaos," so too have I attempted to make sense and order out of disparate materials.[22]

[22] This quotation is a caption from Lady Allen of Hurtwood's *Planning for Play* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1968), 61.

CHAPTER ONE

Designing a Part of Nature: The Playground as Landscape

The playground at the Children's Creative Centre (CCC) started like many other landscape architecture projects: with an empty plot of ground next to a building that had already been designed.[23] It was a small area, 125 by 60 feet, the size of an "average city lot."[24] As Polly Hill wrote in her 1967 booklet for the CCC, she and her team deemed this modest space appropriate because it reflected the rough dimensions of "pocket-size city playgrounds" with which many cities grappled.[25] Before Cornelia Hahn Oberlander's involvement, the architects of the Canada Pavilion wrote a brief description of how they envisioned the outdoor play area: it would have large play equipment, including a play house, large building blocks, slides, and swings, and shaded areas for hot days.[26] This description of the proposed space suggests that they imagined the play area to be a conventional child-centered space of leisure, largely defined by its equipment.[27] In this chapter I demonstrate that Hahn Oberlander created far more than an arrangement of playground features; rather, she designed a total environment. Dedicating three years and over 700 hours of work to the project, Hahn Oberlander planned the playground meticulously to the very last pine needle.[28]

On May 14th, 1965, H. Leslie Brown, Commissioner General for the Canadian Federal Government Pavilion at Expo 67, wrote to Hahn Oberlander inquiring about her interest in designing a playground for the CCC.[29] He described his vision for the space as a "waiting" area, a

---

[23] Thaisa Way writes that landscape architecture has historically been (and continues to be) treated as secondary to architecture ("Introduction," in *Unbounded Practice: Women and Landscape Architecture in the Early Twentieth Century* [Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2009], 1-9).

[24] Polly Hill, *Children's Creative Centre: Methods and Objectives* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1967), 42.

[25] Ibid.

[26] The team of architects for the Canada Pavilion were Fred Ashworth, Paul Schoeler, Brian Barkham, Z. Matthew Staniewicz, Rod Robbie, Colin Vaughan, and Richard Williams. January 13, 1965. Library and Archives Canada, RG 20-C-2-e, File 1887, Folder 4-3-10-5. See fig. 8 for an aerial rendering of the Canada Pavilion.

[27] By "conventional," I mean a playground with a swing-set, slide, and teeter-totters on flat ground. This was a familiar playground model in the twentieth century.

[28] Cornelia Hahn Oberlander, interview with Charles Birnbaum at her home, office, and at residential and civic projects in Vancouver, British Columbia, August 3-5, 2008. The Cultural Landscape Foundation ; Dini de Ruyter, "The Problem of Play," *The Weekend Columbian* (3 May 1969): 7.

[29] H. Leslie Brown to Cornelia Hahn Oberlander, May 14 1965. ARCH 252382, AP075.S1.D001. Cornelia Hahn Oberlander Fonds, Canadian Centre for Architecture Collection, Montreal.

place where children would go before their art classes at the CCC or while waiting to be picked up by their parents. Further to this, he stated: "We are anxious to equip the yard with new and challenging play equipment that will perhaps point the way for playgrounds of the future."[30] This set the tone that, ideally, the playground would be innovative. The area for the playground was adjacent to the music, drama, art, and nursery school classrooms at the CCC (fig. 9). While the playground area would be visible from the walkways above, the CCC building itself was somewhat absorbed into the Canadian Federal Government Pavilion, its entrance unclear to many passersby.[31] As a close up of the map of Expo 67 demonstrates (fig. 10), the CCC was also on the periphery of the pavilion and the Island of Notre-Dame itself. Bordered clockwise by Katimavik, the People Tree, the Pavilion of Ontario and water, it was a small space dwarfed by massive structures. While these structures soared upward, the playground appeared to be below ground, in a sunken plot (fig. 11).

In an attempt to analyze the playground as a "total environment," this chapter introduces sketches, plans, and other conceptual materials of the playground. The selection I have made reflects my desire to demonstrate how Hahn Oberlander painstakingly planned the playground in volumetric space. This chapter also pays close attention to the constellation of contributors to the playground. While Hahn Oberlander's voice remains the strongest (and rightfully so), I hope that my examples will also reveal how many other actors contributed to its design. What follows are a series of interpretations, overlapping with one another, of the playground on paper and in space. To begin, I analyze the playground as a work of modern design with ties to Bauhaus ideals and pedagogy. I then nuance Hahn Oberlander's methodology, placing her research and observation of children's actions at the center of her practice. I follow this by taking a moment to meditate upon the "garden-like" atmosphere of her playground, defining it as a landscape. This discussion leads me to test the interpretation of the playground as a microcosm of the Canadian Federal Pavilion at Expo 67. Finally, I consider the idiosyncrasies of designing a playground as an exhibition, including provisions for sightlines and the notion of surveillance. In so doing, I situate the playground's design within its dual role as functional play area and display.

---

[30] Ibid.

[31] I discuss this in more detail in chapter two.

Bauhaus Beginnings

A good place to start this chapter is with Hahn Oberlander's plan of the playground from 1965 (fig. 12). The plan delineates the three principal parts of the playground: the nursery playground for children aged 3 to 5 years (enclosed by the hexagonal space), the covered play area (above the hexagonal space), and outdoor playground for children aged 6 to 11 years (below the hexagonal space). Without contextual information about this plan, one could almost mistake it for a modernist work of art.[32] Without any idea of the volumetric space, the textures, or materials used, one could equally assume that the playground was formalist in its design, akin to Aldo Van Eyck's sculptural playgrounds (figs. 14-15). Hahn Oberlander's reduced geometric forms, lines, repetition, and coding in primary colours evoke a decidedly modernist language. In fact, without knowledge of the playground's other sketches, plans, or final form, one could easily mistake photographs of the Vienna Kindergarten (such as figs. 4-5) for documentation of Hahn Oberlander's playground.[33] While her plan does not clarify the surfacing or textures of the space and thereby obscures a great deal about the playground, it is nevertheless very illuminating. The visual language herein, with its harmonious asymmetry and abstraction, makes bare the modernist skeleton of the playground. However, as I will explain later in this chapter, the materials and textures of Hahn Oberlander's playground produced a very different effect from Van Eyck's playgrounds and the Vienna Kindergarten.

Understanding the gravity of Hahn Oberlander's lines and reduced forms requires some consideration of her design background. The Bauhaus School had a significant impact on Hahn

---

[32] Hahn Oberlander's use of primary colours, black lines, and syncopated composition recall the paintings of Vassily Kandinsky, such as his 1923 work Composition VIII (fig. 13). In fact, Hahn Oberlander herself is of the mind that her plan is indeed a work of abstract art. In an interview with Youki Cropas, Hahn Oberlander stated "I mean, just look at my plan! It's a piece of abstract art!" in Cropas, "(Re)Imagining Children's Landscapes: The Social Architecture of Cornelia Hahn Oberlander," M.Arch report, McGill University, 2016. As photographs demonstrate, however, the overall effect of this design in space was not one of abstract, modernist design but rather a dynamic natural environment.

[33] The Vienna Kindergarten was designed by Austrian architect Karl Schwanzer, who also designed the Austria Pavilion at Expo 67. The kindergarten evoked Bauhaus formalism and modernist simplicity. It had building activities with large modular blocks, a puppet theatre, metal play structures, and other activities, as well as a classroom. Like the Children's Creative Centre, it was both a childcare service and an exhibition, with parents and other adult visitors able to watch the children participating in the kindergarten. It accepted children aged three to six years and cost $2.50 per child per half-day ("The Vienna Kindergarten," in *Expo 67: Official Guide*, ed. Charles C. Milne [Toronto, Maclean-Hunter and the Canadian Corporation for the 1967 World Exhibition, 1967], accessed via http://expo67.ncf.ca/expo_67_vienna_kindergarten_p1.html).

Oberlander as a designer. She studied landscape architecture at the Harvard Graduate School of Design from 1945-1947 when Bauhaus emigré Walter Gropius was the director.[34] Consequently, she also took the "Basic Design" course there, Gropius's reimagined version of the Bauhaus's "Vorkurs."[35] The Vorkurs was an introductory course from the Bauhaus in Weimar in 1919, a prerequisite for all students. It was first taught by Johannes Itten, an artist and former kindergarten teacher. Itten approached the Vorkurs with a kindergarten pedagogy, akin to Friedrich Fröbel's – he encouraged his students to experiment and to learn design principles through play and contrast.[36] Gropius's Basic Design course, drawing from this encouragement of creativity and emphasis on first principles, had two main goals: 1) fostering individual creativity and 2) establishing a common formal language.[37]

Through her courses at Harvard, Hahn Oberlander developed a great appreciation for abstract design. While she had loved modernist art, it was not until this moment that she learned "abstract art could also be applied to the ground."[38] In 1988, Hahn Oberlander spoke of the Bauhaus fondly, stating "What I love about Bauhaus is that it is very functional, very abstract, very simple."[39] In fact, she remembers her parents sharing this admiration for the Bauhaus. Her mother, a horticulturalist, "was very attracted to the Bauhaus people" and her father, an engineer, "wanted to streamline the Bauhaus ideas of building, and he talked a great deal to Gropius about bricks and things like that. But he died too soon, so it never came about."[40] Thus, Hahn Oberlander had a predilection for modernism.

Hahn Oberlander's employment of modern language was about more than the aesthetic dimension however. In addition to the fact that Hahn Oberlander studied the principles of

---

[34] Susan Herrington, *Cornelia Hahn Oberlander: Making the Modern Landscape* (Charlottesville & London: University of Virginia Press), 28 ; 30.

[35] Ibid., 25.

[36] Fern Lerner, "Foundations for Design Education: Continuing the Bauhaus Vorkurs Vision," *Studies in Art Education* 46.3 (2005): 216.

[37] Jill E. Pearlman, "The Battle over Basic Design," in *Inventing American Modernism: Joseph Hudnut, Walter Gropius, and the Bauhaus legacy at Harvard* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2007), 203-204.

[38] Hahn Oberlander, interview with Charles Birnbaum.

[39] Stephen Godfrey, "In Person: A Growing Concern," *The Globe and Mail* (2 July 1988): http://0-search.proquest.com.mercury.concordia.ca/docview/385857119?accountid=10246.

[40] Hahn Oberlander, interview with Charles Birnbaum.

modern design, Herrington argues that Hahn Oberlander's life in Weimar Germany, before fleeing Nazi persecution, predisposed her to an appreciation of modern design's social dimension. During this period, there was profound optimism in modern design and its potential to improve society. Herrington writes, "Oberlander's experiences of modern architecture during one of its early evocations in twentieth-century Europe gave voice to her belief that an enlightened life was a modern one."[41] Indeed, Hahn Oberlander's early projects are defined by their social dimension. For Hahn Oberlander, this aspect of modern landscape architecture meant working with rather than for communities. One such example is her first playground, situated in Philadelphia at 18th and Bigler Street, realized in 1954 (figs. 16-18). As Herrington notes, it was to be a model playground for Philadelphia, a symbol of the progressive direction in which the city was headed with regards to their planning of leisure spaces.[42] For this project, Hahn Oberlander conducted exhaustive research on differences between age groups of children, held public meetings, and worked with sculptors and playground manufacturers to design a new line of equipment.[43] Another of Hahn Oberlander's playground designs, this time for Earl's Court Children's Home, Toronto (1958), also appears to be oriented around its social purpose. Its proposal drawing (fig. 19) clearly conveys a sense of community and presents the design as encouraging encounters between children.

Understanding Children

Like the playground in Philadelphia, Hahn Oberlander's Expo 67 playground was meant to be a model for other future playgrounds and convey a sense of progressiveness. Unlike her prior design experience, however, there was to be no community consultation for her Expo 67 playground. Instead, Hahn Oberlander was asked to design for an imagined urban community whose inhabitants would change from day to day. The site was temporary, the playground's very existence transient. As Polly Hill wrote about it, "[it] is in an artificial setting. Our child population does not come from the surrounding district; they and our leaders cannot get to

[41] Herrington, Cornelia Hahn Oberlander, 12.

[42] Ibid, 52.

[43] Ibid., 52-54. Hahn Oberlander worked with Egon Moeller-Nielsen, who designed play sculptures for the playground.

know one another as a group for continuing projects."[44] Hahn Oberlander's collaborators therefore could not be a specific community with specific needs – instead, they were an imagined community with generalized needs.[45] While Hahn Oberlander believed the ideal team for putting together playgrounds consisted of a landscape architect, educator, and playground supervisor, the Expo working environment was also different.[46] She worked alongside Hill and the architects, but also responded to other stakeholders involved with the Canada Pavilion at Expo 67.[47] Designed specifically for the "city child," Hahn Oberlander's playground reflected emerging and established ideas of child-centered spaces and creative play.[48] As she notes in an article published in 1969, her design process for the Expo 67 playground began first and foremost with understanding children. This involved two distinct parts: 1) becoming familiar with new ideas in childhood pedagogy and 2) observing children, specifically her own.[49]

Mother to three children, Hahn Oberlander discussed the experience of observing them with the press as well as in her correspondence with Polly Hill during the development of the Expo playground. In one instance, Hahn Oberlander tested out Hill's suggested dimensions for the Expo playground's canal, stating that it was much too small because her "8-year-old could hardly manoeuvre in it."[50] As she recalls, "the years of raising the children and play were combined because I could take them to the playgrounds while they were under construction. And they didn't notice what mother was doing. So it was interesting. And I worked at an office maybe two hours a day or four hours a week, that's all I could do, to verify my drawings and

---

[44] Hill, *Children's Creative Centre*, 41-42.

[45] I wish to distinguish my use of the phrase "imagined community" from Benedict Anderson, for whom the phrase refers to the nation ("Introduction," in *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* [London: Verso, 2006], 1-7).

[46] Dini de Ruyter, "The Problem of Play," *The Weekend Columbian* (3 May 1969): 4.

[47] Hahn Oberlander also worked with architects on other projects at Expo 67, noting, "In particular I worked with another landscape architect, Don Graham on Île Sainte-Hélène which is the island on which the Canadian Federal Pavilion stood…And I interacted with a big committee in these meetings and was able to be a guide for tree selection and so forth" (Hahn Oberlander, interview with Charles Birnbaum).

[48] The phrase "city child" is Hahn Oberlander's own. As she writes in "Space for Creative Play," *The Canadian Landscape Architect* (1966): 16, "The restful, garden-like atmosphere of gentle mounds, pine trees, and hedges is purposefully created to contrast with the concrete and asphalt jungle effect of the world of the city child."

[49] Ibid.

[50] Hahn Oberlander to Polly Hill, 15 September 1965. ARCH 252382, AP075.S1.D001. Cornelia Hahn Oberlander Fonds, Canadian Centre for Architecture Collection, Montreal.

things like that. But otherwise, it was home-industry."[51] Hahn Oberlander's private and public responsibilities, like those of many mothers working in professional spheres, intersected out of necessity.[52] While Hahn Oberlander's status as a mother has no direct bearing upon her aptitude to design for children, her relationship to her children constitutes an important aspect of her methodology. Her observations allowed her to design not only with greater sensitivity to the stature of young children, but also to elicit specific stimulating encounters and experiences. On her starting point for designing the Expo 67 playground, Hahn Oberlander writes: "I asked myself, 'What is it that children really like to do?' They like to run, to climb, to crawl, to build, to feel contrasting textures, and see colors."[53] These actions – the movements of haptic perception – were at the centre of her playground.[54]

Feeling Nature

On September 15, 1965, Hahn Oberlander sent Hill a detailed account of the playground to accompany her plan, complementing her drawn lines with evocative descriptions. She wrote, "During the summer I have done a great deal of reading and thinking about playgrounds and from all the happenings in the world today with continuing urbanization, I felt a playground must not be developed as a piece of abstract design but as part of nature, with mounds, trees, water, sand, and rocks. Children today do not get a chance to feel the wonders of nature."[55] This statement encapsulates the ethos of the Expo playground. On the point of playgrounds as "abstract design," Hahn Oberlander was resolute in her rejection of modernist, paved spaces such as Van Eyck's playgrounds mentioned previously. She had been researching the work of architects and landscape architects alike, specifically C. Th. Sørensen and Lady Allen of Hurtwood. Sørensen, a Danish architect, had designed many formal playgrounds in Copenhagen before noticing that children preferred to play in junk yards and building sites. He opened the

[51] Hahn Oberlander, interview with Charles Birnbaum.

[52] To learn more about what this looks like in the contemporary context, see Annmarie Adams and Peta Tancred, *Designing Women: Gender and the Architectural Profession* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000).

[53] Hahn Oberlander, "Space for Creative Play," 16.

[54] Here I am conceiving of the "haptic" as described by Maire Eithne O'Neill in "Corporeal Experience : A Haptic Way of Knowing." *Journal of Architectural Education* 55.1 (2001): 3–12. doi:10.1162/104648801753168765.

[55] Hahn Oberlander to Hill, 15 September 1965.

first "Junk Playground" in 1943.[56] Lady Allen of Hurtwood, a British landscape architect, visited the playground in 1945 and subsequently set up similar playgrounds in London, branding them "adventure playgrounds."[57] These adventure playgrounds, with loose parts, scrap materials, and infinite possibilities for diverse types of play, took for granted the notion that children ought to be able to manipulate and experiment with their environment in creative ways.[58]

Hahn Oberlander read extensively about adventure playgrounds and was convinced of their efficacy as the most enjoyable and constructive playspace model for children.[59] Her desire to create "a part of nature" sets her playground apart from these adventure playgrounds, however. The notion of feeling "the wonders of nature" demonstrates Hahn Oberlander's close attention to how children would respond to the space with their bodies.[60] According to Herrington, understanding Hahn Oberlander's design process requires an understanding of phenomenology, of how bodies encounter and are shaped by space.[61] Hahn Oberlander demonstrates her keen attention to possible movements in space, and in particular, their importance to her process, in the continuation of her letter to Hill from September 15th, 1965. In great detail, she describes a child's encounters in the playground sequentially. [62]

The playground begins at the covered area, which includes interactive wall of op-art puzzles with lights, as well as musical screens, art film screenings, a commando net, and a sand table. Hahn Oberlander describes not only the setting and composite parts, but also the actions that are possible: "pushing" and "seeing." She moves on to her description of the general play area, where she says children will "distribute to" the docks or viewing area, the sand and canal

---

[56] Hahn Oberlander, *Playgrounds… A Plea for Utopia or the Re-Cycled Empty Lot*, 3. Hahn Oberlander visited this playground in 1955 (Hahn Oberlander to Hill, 7 October 1966, Library and Archives Canada, RG 20-C-2-e, Vol. 1887, Folder 4-3-10-5).

[57] C. Th. Sørensen, "Preface," *Planning for Play*, ed. Lady Allen of Hurtwood (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1968), 9.

[58] Allen, 16.

[59] This is her main argument in *Playgrounds… A Plea for Utopia or the Re-Cycled Empty Lot*, where she makes a plea for widespread acceptance and implementation of adventure playgrounds in North America.

[60] While the sources and observations listed in this section reflect my own work and research with the material, I wish to acknowledge a conversation I had with artists Meredith Carruthers and Susannah Wesley, wherein they described their fascination with Hahn Oberlander's description of gestures in space in her letter to Hill.

[61] Herrington, Cornelia Hahn Oberlander, 99.

[62] Specifically, a child aged between 6 and 11 years, the age range for the covered and general play area.

area, the treehouse area, the house store and school play area, or the wobbly walk. She also describes in detail the surfacing of the playground, which varies from pine needles over tamped earth, to shredded bark, to human-made rubberized surfacing. She notes the placement of pine trees in a few key areas, "to give a natural feeling to the area and also act as a visual and noise barrier for the children in the classroom."[63] Barring the sense of smell, Hahn Oberlander considers how children would encounter her playground with all senses, from the texture of the ground to the sight of tall pine trees.[64]

These descriptions convey that the playground was not only a collection of play features, but a "total environment."[65] Related to the notion of *gesamtkunstwerk*, or "total work of art," the notion of total environment emphasizes how the distinct elements in an environment work together to produce a larger work of art.[66] Donald Theall argues that this notion defines Expo 67 as a whole, stating that, unlike previous world's fairs' symbols (such as the Eiffel Tower), "Expo 67 has no single symbol but is itself a symbol as a total environment, a work of art."[67] The notion of total environment was also used to describe the Canadian Pavilion.[68] For Hahn Oberlander, conceiving of her playground as a total environment underscored how carefully she had designed each of the elements of the space in relation to one another.

In particular, Hahn Oberlander was sensitive to how the natural elements in her playground formed a cohesive environment. In her 1967 Federal Government report on the CCC, Hill wrote the following about the impact of Hahn Oberlander's "ingenious arrangement" of natural elements: "Besides the play value of the individual pieces of equipment in the playground, the quality of the children's play was influenced by the excellent arrangements of

---

[63] Hahn Oberlander to Hill, 15 September 1965.

[64] One could say, however, that her inclusion of pine trees in the description evokes the strong scent of pine. Thank you to Cynthia Hammond for pointing this out. Since I have congenital anosmia, I had not initially considered the scents of the playground.

[65] De Ruyter, 4.

[66] Donald Theall, "Expo 67 as Total Environment," in *Reimagining Cinema: Film at Expo 67*, 3-16 (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2014), 17.

[67] Ibid.

[68] Hugo McPherson, "Sculpture in Canada," in *Architecture and Sculpture in Canada: Canadian Government Pavilion, Expo 67* (Ottawa: Roger Duhamel, 1967), 9.

mounds and flat spaces, sand, water, and covered areas."[69] It is therefore possible to define the playground as a landscape in and of itself. Herrington argues that all playgrounds should be conceived as landscapes, because doing so acknowledges their emotive qualities.[70] Although Herrington is primarily arguing for the need to consider mass-produced playgrounds as landscapes, it bears repeating in this instance as there is a certain degree of feeling in the shapes and textures of the elements in the playground. Indeed, in the case of Hahn Oberlander's Expo playground, it was meant to evoke delight in its visitors. This would be the true measure of its success. Hahn Oberlander strove for a "restful garden-like atmosphere." Part of the rationale behind this is that the "city child," the intended user of this playground, required a tranquil place of refuge away from "everyday pressures" and "disturbing or diverting influences."[71] How could one achieve this amidst the hyper-stimulating hustle and bustle of Expo 67? For Hahn Oberlander, the landscaping itself would dampen the exhibition's diverting influences. Tall pine trees provided shelter. The fence bordering the side of with the canal, which looked out into water, would be lined with bulrushes to "relieve the monotony of the fence."[72] Her shaping of mounds and little hillocks also stimulated the senses and gave the semblance of a natural setting. The asymmetry of the arrangement of shapes and lines in the playground gave the eyes much to observe and encouraged movement.[73]

While it could be a tranquil space, the playground could also be a very challenging one, a space to expend all one's energies. The tree house's rope ladder (fig. 21), for example, tested upper body strength. The dory in the stream (fig. 22) was an opportunity to test one's balance. The interlocking logs for building were large for some of the young children and, beyond demanding physical exertion, engaged their minds. More than mere entertainment or physical

---

[69] Polly Hill, "Report to the Commissioner General of the Canadian Pavilion, Mr. H.L. Brown: Children's Creative Centre Operation (six months during Expo '67)." 1967. File 1: Playground for Children's Creative Centre, Canadian Federal Pavilion, Expo '67. 1965-1967. AP075.S1.D001. Cornelia Hahn Oberlander Fonds, Canadian Centre for Architecture Collection, Montreal.

[70] Susan Herrington, "Playgrounds as Community Landscapes*Built Environment* 25, no. 1 (1998): 25–33.

[71] Hahn Oberlander, "Space for Creative Play," 16.

[72] Hahn Oberlander to Hill, 15 September 1965. See figure 20 for a drawing of the plan for planting bulrushes.

[73] Herrington describes this feature of modern landscape architecture in Cornelia Hahn Oberlander, 76.

stimulation, the playground was a setting for active and stimulating play. It is in this context of active entertainment that I consider briefly the playground alongside other displays at Expo 67. Returning to the covered area of the playground, I argue that this space more explicitly echoed what many remember from Expo 67 – the display of visual technologies, the screens, and the chromophilia.[74]

For Hahn Oberlander, in the playground the child first encountered colourful screens. This covered area housed a vibrant op-art puzzle with light effects and interactive musical screens designed by sculptor Gordon Smith (figs. 23-24). Hahn Oberlander even proposed the screening of experimental animated films by Norman McLaren, such as *Horizontal Lines* and *Fun with Numbers*.[75] While Hahn Oberlander envisioned that children would sit on tree stumps in this area, it was otherwise devoid of nature. Considering how she anticipated the movement of children from covered area to the playground, the covered area functioned as a sort of mediating space from interior to exterior, from virtual to natural. When one considers the landscapes of leisure and passive entertainment at Expo 67 – between lazy river rides at La Ronde and numerous multi-screen film displays – Hahn Oberlander's inclusion of "screens" in her playground could be seen as a playful engagement with the dominant modes of display at the fair. After all, Expo 67 was the site of more displays of media technologies than any prior world exhibition.[76] While there were opportunities for quiet play, nothing was passive about the playground; even the screens were meant to be manipulated for their effects.[77] That is, in order to

[74] Here I am drawing from Kenneally and Sloan's edited book *Expo 67: Not Just a Souvenir* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010). In their introduction they write that "Expo 67 as a whole was a veritable showcase for new visual technologies," 14. Johanne Sloan further discusses the notion of chromophilia in her chapter in the same book, "Postcards, Chromophilia, and the Visual Culture of Expo 67," 176-189.

[75] These films were later scrapped from the plan because it would have been too costly (Library and Archives Canada, RG 20-C-2-e).

[76] Gagnon and Marchessault, "Introduction," 3. In 1967, critic Judith Shatnoff wrote that Expo 67 "was a fair of film," noting in particular the large amount of multiscreen films and their popularity amongst visitors (Shatnoff, "Expo 67: A Multiple Vision" *Film Quarterly* 21.1 [1967]: 3). As part of Expo publicity, filmmakers stated that "Expo will change film-making more than any other event in history" (Austin F. Lamont, "Films at Expo – A Retrospect," *Journal of the University Film Association* 21.1 [1969]: 3).

[77] Hahn Oberlander mentions the provision for quiet play, such as storytelling area with books and sand table for quiet play (Hahn Oberlander to Hill, 15 September 1965.)

make sound and play with light effects, children had to manipulate pieces of string and use mallets.

Young Canada

In light of the previous discussion of the "total environment" of the playground, another possible interpretation of the playground is as a microcosm of the Canada's self-representation at Expo 67. For one, it was to be designed in Canadian materials only. This meant that both the materials of the play equipment and the plants were sourced from Canada. Understanding the CCC's place as a miniature version of the Canada Pavilion requires some knowledge of the image Canada endeavoured to represent. Expo 67 gave Canada a platform on which to present "a strong, hopeful and unified Canada."[78] This unity is not to be conflated with uniformity, however. One of Canada's perceived strengths was the variety of its component parts. In their introduction to the booklet series for the various features of the Canada Pavilion, H. Leslie Brown and Lucien Parizeau write that "Canada has different meaning for different people…The diversity of styles and views apparent in these short essays thus reflect the broader diversity that is a trait of the Canadian people."[79] Insofar as children were accepted to the CCC on a first-come, first-serve basis, the centre's staff were bilingual, and the playground's equipment catered to wide variety of skill levels and interests, it was a site that welcomed and even encouraged diversity.[80] And yet, the overall message was one of unity, or rather, "unity in diversity."[81]

The question of materials, and especially lumber, in the playground is also relevant to national identity and recalls Canada's presentation of "staple goods" in world's fairs from the

[78] Cynthia Hammond, "The (Human) Habitat: Humanism, Architecture and Habitat 67/04" *Architecture and Identity*, Ed. Peter Herrle and Erik Wegerhoff (Hamburg, Berlin, London: Lit Verlag, 2008), 229.

[79] Brown and Parizeau, "Preface," in *Children's Creative Centre: Methods and Objectives*, ed. Polly Hill (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1967), 2.

[80] The question of diversity of ethnic backgrounds is a slightly different one. While official documentary photographs depict almost exclusively white children, one report from playground supervisor Jess Bond describes how in one instance of interracial play: "One I will always remember was the day five girls, each about 10 years old, who were complete strangers to each other and represented vastly different racial origins, built a cozy little house out of blocks" (Harriet Law, "Freedom and Cooperation at Expo Creative Centre," Monday Morning (1967): 31.

[81] Miedema discusses this with regard to the Canadian Federal Pavilion, 122.

early twentieth century.[82] Cynthia Hammond notes how Canada privileged natural resources in its displays at Expo 67.[83] The sheer weight of the "Forestry" section of the Canada Pavilion's press release document – by far the thickest of the sections in the press package – is a testament to the place the forest holds the Canadian imaginary.[84] The playground, composed largely of wood, could therefore be read as a display not only of Canadian design or competence in education, but of the Canadian landscape itself. The staggered tree trumps, the large trees, the treehouse itself – all of these contribute an idyllic image of Canada's natural resources. This idyllic image was further exaggerated elsewhere at Expo 67, namely at the Pulp and Paper Industry Pavilion, which was designed as an infantilized forest with cute, brightly coloured tree shapes (fig. 25).

The use of Canadian materials and the invocation of the mythic Canadian landscape requires the consideration for another issue, which is the place held by Indigenous children in this playground. While there is no explicit Indigenous imagery in the playground, the nursery play area had a small metal structure from a play catalogue called a "tee-pee" (fig. 26), a pyramidal climbing structure, five feet high. In the catalogue for this structure, the partly illegible caption reads: "The Tee-Pee naturally suggests the […] rites which delight the youngsters […] energy calls for action they can climb […] tumble as a change from story telling […] play acting."[85] To be clear, the inclusion of this structure does not reflect an idealization of Indigenous motifs by Hahn Oberlander, in large part because it is not her own design and does not even appear to have been her own idea.[86] Rather, the presence of this structure reveals more about willful blindness to conflict between settler-colonial and Indigenous peoples in Canada at large.

The appropriation of Indigenous motifs and imagery in child-centered spaces has a complicated history marked in part by the settler-colonizer's ethnocentric infantilization of

---

[82] In particular I am thinking of the fairs described in Alexandra Marie Mosquin's doctoral dissertation "Advertising Canada Abroad: Canada on Display at International Exhibitions, 1920-1940," PhD Diss, Department of History, York University, July 2003.

[83] Hammond, 229.

[84] "Expo 67 : avant-première pour la presse, le pavillon du Canada, le 10 avril, 1967." Canadian Centre for Architecture, T752 1967.

[85] Library and Archives Canada, RG 20-C-2-e, Vol. 1887, File 4-3-10-5. Due to poor reproduction, the caption is somewhat illegible.

[86] I posit this because the handwriting on the catalogue entry does not appear to be Hahn Oberlander's own and the structure she drew in the conceptual drawing is slightly different from this.

Indigenous peoples. In the context of American summer camps in the postwar period, for example, Abigail Van Slyck discusses the appropriation of Native American motifs, arguing that this phenomenon was perhaps "a suggestion that Indian-white relations were a nonissue in the modern world."[87] Settler-Indigenous relations, of course, were certainly an issue, as the conflicts around the Indians of Canada Pavilion at Expo 67 demonstrated. Like the "tee-pee" climbing structure, the pavilion was in a tipi shape and modernist in design (fig. 27). Inside, the pavilion's exhibitions revealed the extent to which settler-colonial culture and policy alienated and oppressed Indigenous cultures. As Jane Griffith writes, "While the rest of Expo 67 jockeyed for a chance to show off educational innovations, the Indians of Canada Pavilion exposed education that alienated Indigenous children from their families, cultures, and languages."[88] With a decolonizing pedagogy, it sought to educate visitors about how Indigenous children were treated by government policies. All the while, as Randall Rogers notes, the Indians of Canada Pavilion was marginalized on the Expo site itself, located the furthest outside the circular arrangement of the Canada Complex.[89]

In spite of this, the Federal Pavilion of Canada gave the message of a hopeful and unified Canada. As Miedema argues, "Sanitized and sterilized for the world, all Canada's ugly ghosts of disunity and dissent were deeply buried in the closet."[90] Rather than confront its messy colonial past, Canada chose instead to look to the future, as seen in its "Changing Times" section which stated that Canada was still developing.[91] Miedema writes that the section demonstrated how "Canadians, through cooperation and the application of their intelligence, had used technology to master their environment and had created a thriving and prosperous nation where wilderness had once stood."[92] If, like Miedema, I consider this section the defining message of the Canada Pavilion, the playground does not quite fit with the image Canada sought to project for the future. The playground was forward-looking, emphasizing the nation's future generation of

[87] Van Slyck, *A Manufactured Wilderness*, 212.

[88] Griffith, 177.

[89] Randall Rogers, 21.

[90] Miedema, 123.

[91] Ibid., 122.

[92] Ibid., 121.

adults, yet its message was not one of technological ambition but rather a reaction to urban children's increasing alienation from nature. It is also clear from Hahn Oberlander as well as Hill's writings about the CCC that the design was intended for all children everywhere, with particular attention to children in cities.[93] While the natural environment in this particular playground incorporated indigenous plants and materials, its message was one of a universalized childhood in an ahistorical nature.

Site-lines

As her sketches demonstrate, Hahn Oberlander not only considered how children would inhabit the space of the playground, but also how visitors would encounter it. In the CCC's classrooms, the architects implemented one-way mirrors so that visitors could observe children in the classrooms without the children noticing that they were being watched.[94] Meanwhile, in the playground, the only way visitors could observe play in the playground was by looking from the walkway above – the principal view was a view downward (figs. 28-29). Looking down into the playground meant that visitors could observe all of it at once. There was however another view into the playground, from inside the CCC. In order to receive natural light, each of the classrooms had a glass curtain wall bordering the playground (fig. 30). The playground's activities were therefore visible from all the classrooms, unless of course the teachers decided to draw the curtains.

How does the visibility of children in these spaces relate to the notion of surveillance? In her discussion of child-centered spaces, Helga Zeiher describes playground design as "a structural form of control over children."[95] Elizabeth A. Gagen argues that the fence of early playgrounds in America made them an "institution" and a "controlled, visible space"; the same is true here, where the railings and fence quartering the playground institutionalized it and facilitated its presentation of a single ideology – that of creative, unbridled play. The added feature of one-way glass could be said to give the playground a panoptic aura, wherein children

[93] This echoes the universalist language of Expo 67 itself.

[94] As previously mentioned, the architects of the CCC, and the Canada Pavilion overall, were Fred Ashworth, Paul Schoeler, Brian Barkham, Z. Matthew Staniewicz, Rod Robbie, Colin Vaughan, and Richard Williams.

[95] Zeiher 146.

did not know how or by whom they were being watched.[96] In spite of this, it would be misguided to define the playground as a panopticon simply because visitors could watch the children play. This is in part because, as I will discuss in the final chapter of this thesis, children's relationship to their visibility varied, and not all children noticed they were effectively on display. Furthermore, as Henriette Steiner and Kristin Veel note, the power relation in the context of visibility in architecture is interchangeable. The moment children noticed they were being watched, the spectators themselves became the objects on display.[97] Steiner and Veel also emphasize that visibility and invisibility are not mutually exclusive but rather exist side by side. Children had ample areas to hide from view and control the conditions under which they were watched.

Hahn Oberlander's considerations for sightlines were not the only idiosyncrasies involved in the designing of the playground. Hahn Oberlander later lamented the fact that she was not permitted to include hammers and nails in the playground, something which she believed to be of "prime importance," and which she implemented in some of her subsequent playgrounds (fig. 31).[98] Thus, while the playground at Expo 67 represented many of Hahn Oberlander's ideas, it was shaped by the resistance of various stakeholders. In one letter reporting on her meeting with the "Recreation Committee," Hill writes to Hahn Oberlander expressing their concerns with her design, taking issue with the messiness of having sand so close to the canal, for example.[99] While Hill encouraged Hahn Oberlander's innovation in design, the reality was that Hahn Oberlander did not have full creative freedom, as committees and representatives scrutinized every aspect of the design. This chapter has shown in some depth the painstaking detail Hahn Oberlander took to design her playground at Expo 67. It has equally situated the playground on the Expo 67 site and considered it amongst some of the other attractions, such technological displays and the

[96] In the third chapter of this thesis, I will clarify how this was not always true, as some children did not feel as though they were being watched, while others quickly caught on to the one-way glass and went up to it to try and discern their parents on the other side.

[97] Steiner and Veel 225.

[98] Marilyn Chilvers, "NSNH Creative Playground," *Junior League of Vancouver: News and Views* (May-June 1969): 7.

[99] Hill to Hahn Oberlander, September 30, 1965. File 1: Playground for Children's Creative Centre, Canadian Federal Pavilion, Expo '67. 1965-1967. AP075.S1.D001. Cornelia Hahn Oberlander Fonds, Canadian Centre for Architecture Collection, Montreal.

decolonizing pedagogy of the Indians of Canada Pavilion. I have also demonstrated the extent to which other actors – Polly Hill, Hahn Oberlander's children, and the stakeholders of the CCC – contributed to the final design of the playground. This chapter pushed beyond the design's becoming, taking into account not only how stakeholders shaped it, but also users themselves. A crucial means of addressing this was to consider the playground as a landscape, an approach that acknowledges how it is a designed space and anticipates how it elicited emotional responses. The gestures, the haptic perception, the bodily encounters – these are things that I take up again in the final chapter on experiences in the playground. In the next chapter, however, I draw attention to the adults lining the railing above the playground.

CHAPTER TWO

Gazing at Expo 67's Children: Grown-Up Responses

Because the playground's design set up a boundary between child-centred and adult spaces, it is crucial to consider how adults gazed upon the CCC. In the previous chapter, I demonstrated how Hahn Oberlander strove to consider her Expo 67 playground from the perspective of a child and how her methodology involved careful attention to her own children. I also characterized the playground as a site of negotiation between numerous stakeholders. Many adults dreamt, designed, visited, interpreted, and admired the playground. It was more than a mere play space; the playground was an exhibition designed to impress upon and cater to its visitors. This chapter therefore addresses how an adult public – gazing from above – interpreted the playground, and the implications of those gazes and impressions. Speaking about the playground's reception in these terms underscores the adult-child binary. While potentially essentialist, an adult-child binary opposition is useful in illuminating how adults construct and perceive childhood, and likewise, how children imagine adulthood. It is also useful because the design of the CCC clearly delineated children's space from that of parents and visiting adults.

In recent years, Lee Edelman, John Gillis, Kathryn Bond Stockton, Cindi Katz, and Claudia Castañeda have argued how the child offers a compelling figure for adults, a site of projection for hopes and anxieties about the future.[100] As Frederika Eilers demonstrates, children at Expo 67 were put on display in many ways.[101] The phenomenon of play on display is not specific to the context of a world's fair, however. Elizabeth A. Gagen argues that one of the ambitions of early American playgrounds was to put play on display as a means of assuaging the fears of the neighbouring community regarding juvenile delinquency. Seeing boys playing baseball in a designated, institutionalized space, for example, could reassure the surrounding

---

[100] In particular I am referring to the following texts: Lee Edelman, *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2004); John R. Gillis, "The Islanding of Children — Reshaping the Mythical Landscapes of Childhood," in *Designing Modern Childhoods: History, Space, and the Material Culture of Children,* ed. Maria Gutman and Ning de Coninck-Smith, 316–31 (New Brunswick, New Jersey and London: Rutgers University Press, 2008); Kathryn Bond Stockton, "Growing Sideways, or Why Children Appear to Get Queerer in the Twentieth Century" in *The Queer Child, or Growing Sideways in the Twentieth Century* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2009), 1-57; Cindi Katz, "Cultural Geographies Lecture: Childhood as Spectacle: Relays of Anxiety and the Reconfiguration of the Child" *Cultural Geographies* 15.1 (2008): 5–17; Claudia Castañeda, *Figurations: Child, Bodies, Worlds* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2002).

[101] Eilers, "Man in His World, Children in Theirs," 2010.

community that it was fostering competent citizenry. Visible from outside the bounds of the spaces, children were under public surveillance and scrutiny, while also being "showpieces" from which the surrounding community could learn.[102] Roy Kozlovsky has also discussed the impact of seeing children at play, arguing that children playing in rubble and ruins of the Second World War in England participated in a metaphor for regeneration.[103] These historical precedents suggest that children being watched playing is not a unique phenomenon, and one with implications beyond mere child's play.

Reading the playground's reception allows me to put Hahn Oberlander's archival material at the Canadian Centre for Architecture in dialogue with archived letters and various media previously unexamined.[104] Looking at these moments of reception also allows me to situate the playground within nationalist discourse, expanding upon the discussion of its relation to the Canada Pavilion. From the traces that remain, it is certain that the playground enchanted many children and impressed adults of different backgrounds and nations. Even today, the playground occupies a somewhat mythic status, much like Expo 67 itself, perhaps aided by a resurgence of interest in the adventure playground model.[105] Why did visiting journalists, educators, and families respond so well to Cornelia Hahn Oberlander's design? What does adult engagement with the playground reveal about attitudes toward modern childhood? And how are these observations marked by sexist attitudes?

---

[102] Elizabeth A. Gagen, "An Example to Us All: Child Development and Identity Construction in Early 20th-century Playgrounds," *Environment and Planning* 32 (2000): 603.

[103] Roy Kozlovsky, "Adventure Playgrounds and Postwar Reconstruction," in *Designing Modern Childhoods: History, Space, and the Material Culture of Children*, ed. Marta Gutman and Ning de Coninck-Smith (New Brunswick, New Jersey and London: Rutgers University Press, 2008), 187.

[104] It is worth noting that Herrington includes a brief section on the playground's reception in *Cornelia Hahn Oberlander: Making the Modern Landscape* (Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press, 2013), 107-109. Although it shares some sources with Herrington's account, my chapter endeavors to put the reception in dialogue with correspondence archived at Library and Archives Canada, as well as theorize this reception with regard to discourse on the mythology of childhood.

[105] The playground has been described and included in various contemporary media, including Alex Smith's Playgroundology blog on June 29, 2012 ("Global Village Playground at Expo 67"), on the cover of the Canadian landscape architect journal Ground 22 (2013), and photographs of the playground resurface regularly on the "Expo 67" Facebook group. It is also used as a case study by Youki Cropas in her M.Arch report on designing contemporary playgrounds.

This chapter has two parts. The first outlines accounts in popular media, correspondence, and the official post-Expo 67 government report (1967) that speak to the playground's success. The second identifies instances where adults imposed gender norms in their impressions of the playground as a means of clarifying how it could not be a gender-neutral space. In so doing, I hope to demonstrate how, in spite of Hahn Oberlander and Hill's efforts to create a gender-neutral, non-prescriptive space, journalists interpreted the activities in the playground and the Children's Creative Centre as gendered and normative. Situating the playground in the media-frenzied, dynamic context of Expo 67 underscores its function as exhibition and its place within the broader network of the fair.

"A tremendous success"

Expo 67 officially opened on April 27th 1967, yet media coverage for the event started well before this. The Children's Creative Center (CCC) and Hahn Oberlander's playground were not exempt from this early attention from Canadian media – in fact, the centre appears to have been greatly anticipated. As early as November 2nd, 1965, the Montreal Gazette and Montréal Matin profiled the centre, and The Globe and Mail published two articles mentioning the CCC in 1966.[106] In January 1967, The Montreal Star featured an extensive review of the center, specifically the playground, declaring that it sought to "set an example for future Canadian playgrounds."[107] There was also interest in the playground from a design perspective, as demonstrated by a feature in The Canadian Architect in March 1966 which included Hahn Oberlander's conceptual sketch and plan for the playground.[108] Amid the flurry of press for Expo 67, these articles on the playground are not exceptional. Instead, they demonstrate that Hahn Oberlander's playground was subject to the positive press and anticipation that surrounded the

[106] "Children to be Creative at Expo," *Montreal Gazette*, 2 November 1965, as cited in a press document compiled by Roger Laroche; "À l'Expo, l'art et l'enfant," *Montréal Matin*, 2 November 1965, as cited in a press document compiled by Roger Laroche; "Expo will offer creative centre for children," *The Globe and Mail*, 2 May 1966, 12; "A place for the lost and the cranky: Expo plans a garden to keep small children and parents happy," *The Globe and Mail*, 13 December 1966, 11.

[107] Joyce Goodman, "Canadian Pavilion Promises Model for Future Parks – 'A Revolt Against Asphalt," *The Montreal Star*, January 9th 1967, as cited in a document compiled by Roger Laroche. Hill alone was interviewed for this article, wherein it is stated that the playground was "designed according to Mrs. Hill's specifications by Vancouver landscape architect Cornelia Hahn Oberlander."

[108] "Odds and Ends," *The Canadian Architect* 11.3 (1966): 5-6.

whole event. Still, they suggest that the playground was something Canadians ought to know about.

As a result of all this media attention, organizations and individual visitors sought to make appointments to visit the CCC, writing letters to the centre's project director, Polly Hill.[109] Some visitors were keen on participating in the experiment of the CCC; others were simply looking to plan their childcare options for the event. Although the childcare aspect of the CCC was one of its biggest draws, press documents about the CCC and subsequent articles emphasized that it was not a babysitting service; rather, it was an experimental educational program.[110] This would likely have been very attractive to families visiting Expo, who would have been familiar with at least some of the pedagogy of the mid-century project of the creative child. Based on what Amy F. Ogata argues in *Designing the Creative Child: Playthings and Places in Midcentury America*, educators and psychologists encouraged parents in North America and to embrace the doctrine of creativity with regard to childhood, and the project of the creative child was widespread and well-accepted by this time.[111] It is also worth noting that the model of a children's creative centre at a world's fair was not unique to the Canada Pavilion at Expo 67. A Children's Creative Centre was also present at the Brussels World's Fair in 1958 and at the Protestant Center at the New York World's Fair of 1964-1965.[112]

Despite these successful precedents, the anticipation for all of Expo 67, and the positive press, the success of the CCC was certainly not guaranteed. On the cusp of the opening of Expo 67, project director Polly Hill feared for the outcomes of her experiment, asking, "Does the Canada Pavilion at Expo 67 house a children's paradise or just an educator's dreamed-up

[109] This was possible for groups but not individuals – individual children were accepted at the center on a first-come, first-serve basis (Polly Hill, "Children's Creative Centre at Canada's Expo 67," *Young Children* 22.5 (1967): 259.

[110] Goodman, "Canadian Pavilion Promises Model for Future Parks."

[111] Ogata's only mention of Canada in her book is in her brief mention of the CCC at Expo 67, 167.

[112] Ibid., 167; Letter from Cornelia Hahn Oberlander to Mr. B. Barenholtz, Director at Creative Playthings, June 25th, 1965, AP075.S1.D001, Canadian Centre for Architecture; "Protestant and Orthodox Center" description in Official Guide, New York World's Fair, 1964-1965, accessed via http://www.nywf64.com/, September 22 2016.

blueprint of one?"[113] If it did not work, she wrote, "it may be the fault of the Expo 67 setting, the enormity of the other attractions, or the physical mechanics of operation which may make it impossible to produce the relaxed, happy atmosphere under such staggering complications and limitations."[114] For Hill, the true measure of success would be how children would respond to it, and this she could not fully guarantee. Hill remained skeptical of the setting of Expo 67, fully aware of its artificial setting, but hoped that this would nevertheless give children joy and visiting pedagogues a good enough idea of what could be possible within the framework of a creative education for children.

Indeed, with regard to the playground, there were a few challenges and not everything ran smoothly.[115] The grass rapidly wore away; puddles formed, and there were even a few injuries, including a "chipped ankle" and a concussion.[116] It became a messy sight. Hill also notes that in spite of the many visitors – over 30 000 children and over 60 000 adults – attendance was lower than expected, which she attributed to poor signage, confusion with other child-centred play spaces, and the design of the centre itself.[117] By the end of Expo 67, however, as far as Hill, Hahn Oberlander, and many others were concerned, the CCC and its playground stood out as "a tremendous success."[118] Evidently satisfied with the outcome, Hahn Oberlander wrote in a letter a year later that "The playground was used exactly as it was designed."[119] Hill writes about her surprise to see the high instance of co-operative play in the nursery play area and how children

---

[113] The opening caption states, "On the eve of opening, complete with hard hat, surrounded by crates and cartons, ringing telephones and inches of construction and landscaping dust, the Project Director trembles." Polly Hill, "Children's Creative Centre at Canada's Expo 67" *Young Children* 22.5 (May 1967): 258.

[114] Ibid., 263.

[115] This is indicated in Hill's "Report to the Commissioner General of the Canadian Pavilion, Mr. H.L. Brown: Children's Creative Centre Operation (six months during Expo '67)." 1967. File 1: Playground for Children's Creative Centre, Canadian Federal Pavilion, Expo '67. 1965-1967. AP075.S1.D001. Cornelia Hahn Oberlander Fonds, Canadian Centre for Architecture Collection, Montreal.

[116] Ibid., 3-4.

[117] Ibid., 1. Specifically, Hill writes that attendance was affected by "people seeing the playground without realizing there was any more to it" and "by people not knowing we were part of the Canadian Pavilion and being unable to find the entrance – even after finding the playground."

[118] Ibid., 13.

[119] Cornelia Hahn Oberlander to M.E. Otter, January 22 1968, in ARCH 252382, AP075.S1.D001. Cornelia Hahn Oberlander Fonds, Canadian Centre for Architecture Collection, Montreal.

"tantrumed when taken out" of the nursery school by their parents.[120] She also notes that thousands of comments in the center's guestbook expressed how impressed visitors were that children were so preoccupied in the playground that they did not notice how they were being watched from above: "On a fine day the railings were lined with spectators."[121] It would seem that even amidst the hyper-stimulating environment of Expo 67 with its many impressive displays of visual technologies, there was something radical enough about Hahn Oberlander's playground to make a mark on its visitors.

People from all over Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom, the USSR, India, Ethiopia, and Tunisia visited the CCC.[122] Among those who announced their presence to CCC staff were journalists from CBS, the NBC Today show, and European newspapers. Writing for The Washington Post on September 7th, 1967, Joan Beck emphasizes the serene setting of the centre, describing its proximity to the Canadian Federal Pavilion's iconic "People Tree." Out of all the exhibits within the centre, the playground receives the most of her attention. In great detail, she describes nearly every component of the playground, from the "brightly-colored" op-art screens to the stumps "useful for sitting or jumping" and the "quiet, shady niche" with small animals and books.[123] In another article for the same daily published on July 9th, 1967, Dorothy Rich lists her recommendations for "Exploring Expo on the Go-Go-Go," naming the CCC a worthwhile childcare option at Expo 67 for parents and describing the playground as "innovative."[124] While articles emphasized the novelty of the CCC, Hill stressed that its philosophy was nothing new – at least, for many American visitors, it was already familiar. She writes that "Americans recognized our school immediately as the type of pre-school programmes that they had at home and we had a tremendous influx of American children."[125] She also wrote to Hahn Oberlander that she felt "that although we are not going to stun the populous with

---

[120] Hill, "Report," 5.

[121] Ibid., 16. Unfortunately I have not been able to locate this guestbook in my research.

[122] Ibid., 2.

[123] Beck, "EXPO Exhibits Nursery School Ideas," G4.

[124] Dorothy Rich, "Exploring Expo on the Go-Go-Go," *The Washington Post, Times Herald* (9 July 1967): F8. Other articles listed the CCC in the context of a childcare option, such as Hélène Pilotte's guide to Expo 67 in *Chatelaine* (May 1967): 49.

[125] Hill, "Report," 5.

uniquely designed creations we are going to accomplish our real aim, which is to intrigue the children and stimulate their imagination."[126] Still, as I demonstrate in chapter one, Hahn Oberlander invested a great deal of consideration into the playground and to call it "familiar" thereby dismisses the great amount of original thinking she put into the design.

Beyond describing its role as a childcare option, these articles signal that the playground was the face of the CCC. Not only did the playground receive accolades; it was also often the most described feature of the centre. This led me to wonder whether some of the visiting journalists actually ventured inside the centre or instead relied upon what they saw from the walkway above. Regardless, the playground, as the only visible exterior component of the CCC, was the visitor's first impression of the centre. I contend that the playground also provided the most compelling imagery of the CCC's ethos, beautifully evoking the metaphor for the philosophy of "creative power" Hill emphasized in her presentations and writing about the CCC.[127] As further evidence to its powerful imagery of the centre's ethos, the only footage of the CCC in the National Film Board film on the Canada Pavilion at Expo 67 was of children playing in the playground (figs. 32-33). The film crew surely had access to the classrooms to document the innovative drama, music, or visual arts classes at the CCC. This begs the question, why did journalists choose the playground as the most evocative aspect of the CCC? I contend that it is because the images of children building outdoors were the most evocative of a free, healthy nation. Just as Kozlovsky argues that children playing in adventure playgrounds in England symbolized postwar regeneration, one could say that the image of children building and playing in Hahn Oberlander's playground evoked a virtuous, active young Canadian nation.

The imagery of Hahn Oberlander's Expo playground circulated anew some time after Expo 67. Long after the site had been cleared of Hahn Oberlander's play features, articles recalled the playground as a means of calling attention to problems city children faced in the late 1960s. In *The Weekend Columbian*, Dini de Ruyter remarked on what could be learned from Hahn

[126] Letter from Hill to Hahn Oberlander, September 21st, 1965.

[127] In a presentation about the CCC at the Canadian Recreation Symposium on June 12, 1967 in Montreal, Hill emphasized the notion of "creative power" ("Resumé of Workshop on Children's Creative Centre given by Polly Hill, Project Director of the Children's Creative Centre, Canadian Pavilion, Expo 67," 1967, Library and Archives Canada RG 20-C-2-e, Vol. 1887, File 4-3-10-8A).

Oberlander's Expo 67 design for playground reform in 1969, stressing that the problems addressed in Hahn Oberlander's design remained unresolved.[128] Another article from 1969, describing a new project by Hahn Oberlander at the North Shore Neighbourhood House in Vancouver, interpreted her work through the precedent of her Expo playground.[129] Hahn Oberlander remained active in promoting the adventure playground model well after Expo 67, writing a report for Recreation Canada at the Department of National Health and Welfare published in 1974.[130]

It is useful to look to another source for information regarding reception: namely, letters sent to Hill's attention over the course of Expo 67's duration.[131] One such letter, addressed from Judith Peter in Toronto, states that "the scope and imagination behind [the] project are remarkable, and [its] achievement … has tremendous implications for preschool and early primary education."[132] Peter was setting up her own nursery school in Toronto and expressed great interest in potentially purchasing playground equipment from Hill post-Expo 67. Many organizations in Montreal and beyond also contacted Hill to inquire about the equipment used in the playground. The Mental Hygiene Institute, the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, the Snowdon branch of the YMCA, and the New School in Vancouver inquired about purchasing equipment or receiving donations. Others, such as schools in Alberta and Ontario, requested patterns and plans for building similar playground features. As Hill mentions in her final report on the CCC, teachers, parents, and architects visited the centre and inquired about its materials. In the end, all playground equipment, which belonged to Crown Assets, was sold.[133] The legacy of

---

[128] Dini De Ruyter, "The problem of play" *The Weekend Columbian* (3 May 1969): 4.

[129] Marilyn Chilvers, "N.S.N.H. Creative Playground" *Junior League of Vancouver: News and Views* (May-June 1969): 6. Chilvers notes how the N.S.N.H. playground is very similar to Hahn Oberlander's Expo 67 playground, the major difference being the inclusion of nails and hammers, something which was not possible in the Expo context.

[130] Cornelia Hahn Oberlander, *Playgrounds… A Plea for Utopia or the Re-Cycled Empty Lot*, Recreation Canada, Fitness and Amateur Sport Branch, Department of National Health and Welfare (1974).

[131] These are archived at Library and Archives Canada, RG 20-C-2-e, Vols. 1865, 1886, and 1887.

[132] Letter from Judith Peter to Hill, September 11 1967, Library and Archives Canada, RG 20-C-2-e, Vol. 1865, File 3-6-3-3.

[133] I was not able to trace the sales of the playground equipment belonging to Crown Assets. All toys and materials not belonging to Crown Assets were donated to the Montreal Children's Hospital and the Family Life Education Council of Montreal.

the playground also continued in other tangible ways. Like Hahn Oberlander, Hill subsequently became a major proponent of the adventure playground movement in Canada, participating in conferences and releasing publications through her work with the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) in the 1970s and early 1980s.[134] Hill used some of Hahn Oberlander's drawings and ideas in her publications advocating for playground reform in Canada.[135]

Since many creative and adventure playgrounds have disappeared since the 1980s, the adoption of Hahn Oberlander's original designs are difficult to trace. Susan Herrington states that a number of playgrounds throughout Canada adopted Hahn Oberlander's boat and wobble walk features.[136] In any event, archival materials convey that the playground impressed upon many adults and was, for many, their first introduction to this kind of playspace model. The playground was the CCC's façade; it excited visitors, and was considered an ideal model playground. In addition to praise, however, the responses to the playground also reveal gender biases. In the next section of this chapter I present evidence of these biases, and argue that both the context of Expo 67 and journalists' observations challenged the playground's aspirations of gender-neutrality.

Mothers and Fathers of Tomorrow

In order to understand how journalists gendered children's activities in the playground, it is worth briefly considering the history of playgrounds in North America. Research into the rationale for early playgrounds in America (i.e. in the early 1900s) demonstrates that learning normative gender behaviour was of foremost concern to reformers and the general public; boys and girls were segregated at a young age so as to inculcate gender-appropriate values and virtues.[137] As Sarah Schmidt explains, this is true of early play spaces in Montreal as well, where

---

[134] These include the following publications: Polly Hill, "Children's Play in Public Housing Projects," Ottawa: CMHC, Living Places 10.1 (1974); CMHC, *Play Spaces for Preschoolers: Design Guidelines for the Development of Preschool Play Spaces in Residential Environment*s (Ottawa: CMHC, 1979). The 1979 document was prepared in collaboration with landscape architect William Rock Jr.

[135] Herrington, *Cornelia Hahn Oberlander: Making the Modern* Landscape, 109.

[136] Ibid. Unfortunately Herrington does not provide a citation for this.

[137] Elizabeth A. Gagen, "An Example to Us All: Child Development and Identity Construction in Early 20th-century Playgrounds," *Environment and Planning* 32 (2000): 599-616. She further emphasizes how these playgrounds were directed towards the conformity of immigrant children into American morals and behavior.

playgrounds and athletic fields were targeted to boys and young men, intended to "entrench the values of the Anglo-Saxon nation, promote a gendered concept of citizenship, curb male vice, contain young men's heterosexual urges, solidify capitalism, and entrench a sexual division of labour modeled on the bourgeois family by inscribing these values into these (mainly) male spaces."[138] This gender segregation also marks other child-centered spaces in North America, including summer camps, well into the twentieth century.[139] This led me to wonder how gender values were manifest in Hahn Oberlander's playground. Nowhere in her archived conceptual documents did Hahn Oberlander presume that one piece of equipment would be more popular with one gender than the other, nor did she explicitly anticipate this kind of gender performance in her playground. Time and again, she and Hill discuss children as a single, genderless category. This is something with which I have grappled. Despite Hahn Oberlander and Hill's tacit endorsement of gender-neutral play, the playground was nevertheless situated in the very gendered context of Expo 67.[140] Regardless of any attempt to neutralize the space, children encountered the space within the context of a gendered, heteronormative world.

One particularly salient example of how gender entered journalists' responses comes from the Toronto Star, in the form of a captioned photograph published on August 8th, 1967 (fig. 21). The photograph depicts two children playing in Hahn Oberlander's playground. In the background, a boy, perhaps aged 10 or 11, uses his strength to climb the rope ladder on the treehouse, creating a dynamic diagonal in the image's composition. Meanwhile, a girl with pigtails, perhaps aged 7 or 8, stands passively in the foreground, her arms hanging by her side, her back to the photographer. The boy is higher than the girl compositionally and engaging with the structure actively. The girl, looking to her right, appears to be lost. We do not know what she was looking at or where she was going, but it does not seem to matter, as the boy is the subject of the caption. It reads: "No boy can resist the rope ladder climb to the tree house in the older

[138] Sarah Schmidt, "Domesticating Parks and Mastering Playgrounds: Sexuality, Power and Place in Montreal, 1870-1930" (Master's Thesis), McGill University, August 1996, 12.

[139] Abigail Ayres Van Slyck, *A Manufactured Wilderness: Summer Camps and the Shaping of American Youth, 1890-1960* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006).

[140] Some of these issues have been discussed in Aurora Wallace's chapter "Girl Watching at Expo 67," in *Expo 67: Not Just a Souvenir*, eds. Rhona Richman Kenneally and Johanne Sloan (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 109-124.

children's playground at the Canadian Creative Centre at Expo. Playground; which was designed by Cornelia Hahn Oberlander; Vancouver; includes stream."[141] Not only does this caption overlook the girl and even a woman in the background – mentioning a stream beyond the frame instead – it also suggests that some of the playground features are naturally suited to boys more than they are to girls. This caption complicates Hahn Oberlander's design, effectively translating her gender-inclusive equipment through a gendered lens.

An article about the CCC from Montreal's Photo-Journal in June 1967 also frames child's play within gender appropriate behaviour, linked to their future normative roles as mothers and fathers (figs. 34-36). Although it describes activities in the centre's preschool rather than the playground, it indicates the degree to which some visitors projected heteronormative future roles onto children at the CCC. The article captions a photograph of a young girl working in a play kitchen with the following: "Making mom's gestures, imitating them with great attention to detail, is an exciting game for every little girl in the world."[142] Another photograph in the same article has the caption, "Dolls are always the favourite of little girls. They are pleased to find all these familiar toys at the Children's Creative Centre."[143] Meanwhile, boys also had their appropriate activities. The caption of a photograph of the playground in the June 1967 issue of Photo-Journal reads: "A truck, a car – do these toys not have a special place for a young man in the making?"[144] By using phrases such as "no boy can resist" or "every little girl in the world,"

---

[141] Photograph by Jeff Goode, *Toronto Star*, 8 August 1967. File: Centennial – Expo – Visitors, Toronto Star Archives. Baldwin Collection, Toronto Reference Library, call number tspa_0004412f.

[142] My translation. Original French: "Faire les gestes de maman, les imiter dans leurs moindres détails, est un jeu passionant pour toutes les petites filles de la terre. Partout où elle a l'occasion de s'adonner à ce jeu, la petite fille est heureuse," in Claire Harting, "Distrayant pour l'esprit, formateur pour le corps: Parents, laissez vos enfants une couple d'heures au Centre d'activité créatrice," *Photo-Journal*, 7-14 June 1967, 8.

[143] My translation. Original French: "Les poupées sont toujours les préférées des petites filles. Elles retrouvent avec bonheur tous ces jouets familiers au Centre d'activité créatrice," Ibid.

[144] My translation. Original French: "les garçons retrouvent aussi au Centre leurs jouets préférés. Un camion, une auto, n'ont-ils pas un attrait tout special pour le jeune homme en herbe?" Ibid.; This allusion to mothers and fathers of tomorrow is evocative of a page layout in Lady Allen of Hurtwood's Planning for Play, a book later recommended by Hahn Oberlander as a must-read resource for planning adventure playgrounds. Hahn Oberlander cites this book in her bibliography to Playgrounds… A Plea for Utopia or the Re-Cycled Empty Lot, 21. Although Allen never explicitly mentions girls' play versus boys' play, the book layout and design convey a different message. A photograph of girls in dresses harvesting something in a basket is captioned "Mothers of tomorrow" and one of a boy hammering a nail into a wall is captioned "Tomorrow's father" (Marjory Allen, Planning for Play [Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1968], 17.)

these captions project the message of a universally binary vision of childhood, resonating with the universalist themes of Expo 67 more generally.[145] In contrast to this problematic framing, other photographic evidence suggests that girls and boys actually enjoyed many of the same playground features, including the treehouse.

The underlying message of these captions, and other instances of gendered projection, establish a problematic with which the final chapter of this thesis contends. In what follows, I outline various ways in which the use of the playground echoes, challenges, and complicates its design, showcasing the voices of staff and children in the playground. Earlier, I stressed that child-centred spaces are inseparable from the adults who design them, just as they are inseparable from the children who occupy and shape them. This chapter endeavoured to qualify and nuance the accounts of adults describing the playground and ultimately assert how gendering and idealization was at play. As Ogata writes, the project of the creative child "was, and still is, the dream and the work of adults."[146] The playground was itself a display, a spectacle of an ideal childhood, subject to the interpretation and scrutiny of adult visitors. Up until this point, I have discussed how the playground was seen from above, from the perspective of its designer and the adults who observed it. As Annmarie Adams writes in the context of gendered design and children's bedrooms, however, "a designer's vision is not a fact, but rather a mere suggestion for users, who may inhabit spaces in very distinct ways."[147] The next chapter therefore endeavours to trace some of these distinct inhabitations, giving space to the voices of those who shaped the playground from the inside – namely, the playground's supervisors and children themselves.

---

[145] Rhona Richman Kenneally and Johanne Sloan discuss this universalism of Expo 67 in their unpacking of the the fair's theme of "Man and his World" ("Introduction: Dusting Off the Souvenir," in *Expo 67: Not Just a Souvenir*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 5.

[146] Ogata, *Designing the Creative Child*, 187.

[147] Annmarie Adams, "The Power of Pink: Children's Bedrooms and Gender Identity," *ZEITSCHRIFT FUR GESCHLECHTERFORSCHUNG UND VISUELLE KULTUR* 50 (2010): 59.

CHAPTER THREE

Chance Encounters: Playing with Gendered Territory

When I asked Cornelia Hahn Oberlander to clarify whether she imagined that her playground designs might be more popular with one gender than the other, she responded that she never designed for girls or for boys – rather, she designed for all children.[148] Similarly, Polly Hill conceived of the Children's Creative Centre as a space where all children would be free to play however they wished, and expressed great contentment with the fact that girls and boys defied conventional gender roles in their play at the centre.[149] However, calling the CCC "gender-neutral" obscures the very gendered structures that children inhabited, within and beyond Expo 67.[150] As we saw in the previous chapter, some journalists' accounts of children's play at the CCC insisted on binary gender norms. To what extent did gendered experiences mark the play and work of those who occupied the playground? The following chapter endeavours to answer this question, speaking to the playground's use by children and the young women who worked there.

This chapter expands on the notion of architecture as process, taking into account not only the playground's design or image, but also how children and staff encountered it as a space. In the pages that follow, I take up concepts that also arose in chapter two – the freedom of children, gendered play, and mess – and consider these within discourse on how bodies shape and are shaped by space. Putting interviews, photographic evidence, and testimonials from social media in dialogue with one another, this chapter privileges empirical evidence and challenges the supposed gender-neutrality of the playground. Drawing from two CCC staff members' emphases on children's "freedom" at the CCC, I describe the nature of this freedom, paying special attention to the notion of "gendered territory." I then look at instances where girls and boys defied the gendering adults projected onto them. I conclude this chapter with a discussion of memory, underscoring its role in constituting space and place. In so doing, I endeavour to give

---

[148] Conversation with Cornelia Hahn Oberlander, Canadian Centre for Architecture, November 16th, 2016.

[149] Hill, "Report," 6-7.

[150] Here I am inspired by the methodology of Adams and Tancred, who, citing Joan Acker, argue that gender neutrality obfuscates the role that gender plays for women in the workplace (Designing Women: Gender and the Architectural Profession [Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000], 123-124).

insight into the playground's use and significance today, all the while acknowledging that this insight is inherently partial, subjective, and incomplete.

Unobtrusive Adults

The playground leader was of paramount importance to the success of a playground with loose parts; on this subject, Cornelia Hahn Oberlander, Polly Hill, and Lady Allen of Hurtwood agreed.[151] Allen describes the ideal playground leader as someone who has warmth, patience, confidence in children's abilities (see fig. 40). She argued that the best leaders were usually untrained, as school teachers typically "have too much to unlearn."[152] Rather than being a disciplinary or authoritarian figure, the playground leader occupied a more informal role, like "an older friend and counsellor."[153] They could intervene or assist children if necessary, but the idea was their presence would not hinder children's autonomous, creative play. This was very much the philosophy of the playground staff at the CCC. As Hill wrote in her report, "We think that the two hours not being interrupted by adults was a kind of haven that the children really needed and responded to."[154] Thus, while the playground staff were present and even appear in the majority of photographs of children playing (as we see in figs. 37-39, 44, 46-48) they often stood in the background.

Since all the playground staff were young women, it is worthwhile considering historical examples of young women working in playgrounds. Suzanne M. Spencer-Wood argues that in the early twentieth century, the American playground reform movement led by women's organizations was a major component of domestic reform, playing a pivotal role in making it acceptable for women to have public professions in America.[155] Because of women's supposed predispositions to nature and childcare, the role of playground supervisor was an acceptable

---

[151] In her 1974 report, Hahn Oberlander wrote, "A competent leader is the key to the successful playground," echoing almost verbatim Lady Allen of Hurtwood's assertion in her 1968 book Planning for Play (Hahn Oberlander, *Playgrounds… A Plea for Utopia or the Re-Cycled Empty Lot*, 5). Allen begins her description of the playground leader by stating that "The key to a successful adventure playground lies largely in the quality and experience of the leader," Planning for Play, 56.

[152] Allen, 56.

[153] Ibid.

[154] Hill, "Report," 6.

[155] Suzanne M. Spencer-Wood, "Turn of the Century Women's Organizations, Urban Design, and the Origin of the American Playground Movement," Landscape Journal 13.2 (1994): 124–37.

profession for young women.[156] It is also worth mentioning that in the twentieth century, whether or not children turned out "right" was often considered to be the responsibility of the mother, not the father.[157] This attitude not only emphasizes a woman's natural predisposition toward childcare, but also her moral obligation to care for children. With no male staff in sight at the CCC, patriarchal ideas about women's suitability to working with children evidently persisted in the context of Expo 67. While the playground and centre's design aimed to be gender-neutral, an integral part of the playground – the role of the supervisory staff – was coded for women. Outfitted in brightly-coloured jumpers, these women were also part of the image of the CCC, and by consequence, the image of the Canada Pavilion.[158] Akin to the hostesses who welcomed visitors to many other pavilions at Expo 67, the staff at the CCC were also on display.[159]

While the playground staff were to be "unobtrusive," they certainly were not passive. Hill remarks that playground supervisors were extremely adept at engaging with children. In her final report, she wrote that "In an on-going playground of this type, important child-adult relationships would build up naturally and informally" and observes that there were "many incidents of this" even in the temporary, transient setting of the CCC.[160] One such playground staff member was Jess Bond, who was a remedial reading teacher from Scarborough, Ontario. As she remembers, she and her fellow playground staff "sat and watched, and learned."[161] Their involvement at a distance meant that they could keenly observe what was going on around them.

---

[156] In passing, these are the same reasons for which landscape architecture has been coded as a women's profession. Duempelmann and Beardsley write the following in their introduction to *Women, Modernity, and Landscape Architecture* (London: Routledge, 2015), 7: "For many women, landscape design appeared as a logical choice, as it originated in garden design and horticulture, which, by the nineteenth century, were often seen as domestic pursuits coded female because of their association with the home and homemaking. Working with nature and creating place added an additional legitimization to women's work as landscape designers, as, of course, the female body has throughout history been identified with nature and the home."

[157] Gill Valentine, "Angels and Devils: Moral Landscapes of Childhood," *Environment and Planning. D. Society & Space* 14.5 (1996): 585.

158

[159] For perspectives on how young women, and particularly Expo 67 hostesses, were put on display, consult Aurora Wallace's chapter "Girl Watching at Expo 67," in *Expo 67: Not Just a Souvenir*, eds. Rhona Richman Kenneally and Johanne Sloan (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 109-124.

[160] Hill, "Report," 16.

[161] Harriet Law, "Freedom and Cooperation at Expo Creative Centre," *Monday Morning* (Dec. 1967): 30.

Bond's account of her experience working in the playground published in the education journal *Monday Morning* in late 1967 is a priceless resource, one to which I will return in this chapter.

All art instructors and playground supervisors at the CCC had professional experience working with children. The visual arts teachers, for example, were staff from the education department at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts.[162] This was not a prerequisite for auxiliary staff at the centre, however. Dr. Hedwige Asselin, who worked at the CCC's reception, had recently completed her doctoral studies in art history in Paris and had no prior work experience with children.[163] In her role at the CCC, she welcomed children and asked them questions to determine which workshops would interest them the most. When I interviewed Asselin, I cut right to the chase, asking if she remembered any of the activities being better suited to boys or girls. She answered no: "We did not see boys and girls differently; they could do whatever they wanted."[164] I was curious if this resonated with Asselin's own childhood. How did she encounter gender-prescriptive play? In fact, since she was brought up around boys, Asselin recalls with great fondness playing with toys typically coded male, such as cars and blocks. She states "I never really played with dolls. I had one doll. I placed her in her bed, and that was it."[165] Remembering for a moment the image caption in *Photo-Journal* about dolls being "the favourite of little girls," Asselin's attitude towards dolls clearly defies that of the journalist. Her memory affirms that not all people shared this essentialist attitude towards girls and dolls. And as Asselin recalls, children at the CCC were free to make their own decisions about how they wished to learn and play. She states that children "were free to choose what they wanted to do. There was no judgement from the beginning. And on the playground, it was the same thing: complete freedom to do what they desired."[166]

---

[162] Hill, "Report," 11.

[163] Hedwige Asselin, interview with author, November 23rd, 2016.

[164] Asselin. Translated from original French: "On ne faisait pas de différence entre garçons et filles; ils avaient droit à faire ce qu'ils voulaient. "

[165] Asselin. Translated from original French : "Et je me souviens pas vraiment avoir joué à la poupée. J'avais une poupée, je la mettais dans son lit, et c'était fini."

[166] Ibid. " [Les enfants] étaient libres de choisir ce qu'ils avaient envie de faire. Il n'y avait pas de jugement au départ. Et sur le terrain de jeu c'était exactement la même chose : pleine liberté pour faire ce qu'ils voulaient." As Keith Daniel who visited the playground at age 7, recalls, this was not particularly unique to the playground, but rather the general atmosphere of Expo 67, where "as a kid, you could climb on the sculptures, investigate nooks and

"Complete freedom"

When children took to using chalk on surfaces other than the blackboard in the play area, no one batted an eye.[167] It seems that, as far as Hill and her staff were concerned, the freer the play – the more self-led – the better. One especially apt example of this free play was the building activities that took place both in the nursery school and in the playground. In the nursery, children were slow to take to building blocks, initially attracted to toys they had at home – trucks, dolls, etcetera. Hill remarks that by the end of the play period, however, children "would start experimenting and concentrating on things like blocks and table construction toys."[168] On the other side of the nursery wall, older children took great interest in the large pine building blocks (fig. 41) and even larger interlocking building logs (figs. 42-46), creating elaborate structures. As Hill recalls, "We had three storey houses, complicated structures that looked quite a bit like the buildings at Expo."[169]

Extant photographs primarily depict boys engaging in building activities, yet both Bond and Hill stress girls' interest in building as well. Hill describes that there was "all kinds of elaborate house play in the various constructions built by both boys and girls" while Bond recalls one instance of a group of five girls, about 10 years old, "who were complete strangers to each other and represented vastly different racial origins," collaborating to build "a cozy little house out of blocks."[170] While it is unclear what Bond meant by "vastly different racial origins," her observation emphasizes cooperative, active play amongst girls who were previously strangers to one another. This anecdote contrasts with the image of block-building in Marc Beaudet's film of the Canada Pavilion mentioned in the previous chapter (see figs. 45-46). Rather than show a wide angle shot of the group of children collaborating on building, the film highlights one boy, perhaps 9 years old, with blond hair in a grey jacket. Calling attention to how Beaudet's film privileges the boy in the playground underscores the ideal image of the child as it appears in mid-

---

crannies, even soak your feet in a pond or water sculpture. And nobody blinked an eye, security was not on your back with authoritarian demands" (Keith Daniel, comment in "Expo 67" public Facebook group, Sept 4th, 2016).

[167] Hill, "Report," 14.

[168] Ibid., 7.

[169] Ibid., 13-14.

[170] Law, 31.

century popular culture: often male and often white.[171] In chapter two, I drew attention to a similar privileging of the male child with the photograph in Toronto Star of the boy on the rope ladder.[172] Contrary to the caption's suggestion that boys were naturally predisposed to rope ladders and girls were not, girls at the CCC also engaged with these features. Figures 47-48, for example, show two girls actively climbing the ladders. Based on these photographs, the playground seems to have been a space where girls felt safe and even enthusiastic about engaging with the equipment. That said, girls in the playground were not exactly "completely free."

In 1969, psychoanalyst Erik Erickson noted that when given toys, including blocks, dolls, furniture, animals, and vehicles, boys designed different scenes than girls. While boys created exterior scenes with tall towers (an expression of their male genitalia, Erickson argues), girls "built simple enclosures with low walls," including home scenes.[173] Writing in 1975, Bonnie Lloyd argues that reasons that boys and girls might build different scenes is not because of biological differences between the sexes, as Erickson argued, but rather because of "sex-role socialization:" "Already their parents had taught them what it means to be a boy or a girl."[174] Further, she argues that by 10 or 11, girls have already had "years of experience" rehearsing their roles as "future homemakers," playing with dolls and dollhouses. For, as she argues, "sexual modes" alone do not determine the sexual division space, but also socially constructed ideas. Discussing how and why children experienced the playground differently requires the acknowledgement that children are not blank slates, but rather conditioned by heteronormative values from an early age.

Without question, while girls and boys may enjoy the same playground features and activities, they often occupy play-spaces differently. In her account of gendered experiences in contemporary playgrounds in Amsterdam, Lia Karsten notes that these spaces are "the first

---

[171] Amy F. Ogata discusses this in her chapter "Constructing Creativity in Postwar America," in *Designing the Creative Child: Playthings and Places in Midcentury America*, 1-34 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013).

[172] In her thesis, Frederika Eilers also discusses how children's activities at the CCC were coded male.

[173] Erik H. Erikson, *Childhood and* Society (W.W. Norton, 1969), as cited by Bonnie Lloyd, "Woman's Place, Man's Place," *Landscape* 20 (1975): 10-11. As Lloyd explains, "For women, [Erikson] believes that the sexual 'inner space' of the body leads to a natural inclination toward interior spaces of other kinds" (10).

[174] Ibid.

arenas in which girls and boys learn to negotiate their behaviour in public."[175] Karsten also describes the asymmetry of gender in childhood, noting that the "natural" gender of childhood is male.[176] That is, girls who partake in activities traditionally deemed "male" are "tomboys" whereas boys who partake in activities traditionally considered "female" are "sissies," a pejorative.[177] She draws from Owain Jones, who further argues that ideal childhood is a "wild, innocent maleness" set in the countryside, speaking to "romantic notions of the innocence of children and of nature."[178] Thus, he argues that while "tomboyism" is a resistance to prescriptive gender roles, , it also shows the extent to which childhood is symbolically male.[179] This is why it is critical to not only discuss instances of girls engaging with equipment and activities coded "masculine," but to also clarify how boys might have engaged with activities coded "feminine." It appears that boys played in more domestic contexts than Hill expected. She remarks that in the nursery play area, for example, "The domestic corner was always full, with boys as well as girls, playing with soap suds and play dough and dress up, washing dishes endlessly."[180] By stating "with boys as well as girls," Hill acknowledges the non-normativity of boys playing domestic games, and validates it. It is worth mentioning that divisions are often less evident among preschool age children than among school-age children, so this cooperative domestic play is less exceptional among these children than it would have been amongst children aged 6-11. Still, it remains significant that Hill saw boys freely washing dishes as a positive outcome.[181]

Negotiating Gendered Territory

While girls were in principle free to play as they wished, and this involved climbing and running as they pleased, this intention was not so simple in practice. That is, the "complete freedom" described in the previous section had its limits. This is something that Karsten, writing

---

[175] Lia Karsten, "Children's Use of Public Space: The Gendered World of the Playground," *Childhood* 10.4 (2003): 471.

[176] Ibid., 460.

[177] Ibid.

[178] Owain Jones, "Tomboy Tales: The Rural, Nature and the Gender of Childhood," *Gender, Place & Culture* 6.2 (1999): 132; 120.

[179] Jones 132.

[180] Hill, "Report," 6.

[181] Karsten, 460.

in 2003, calls "gendered territory."[182] She notes that playgrounds often have clearly defined girls' spaces and boys' spaces. She writes, "Defending a gendered territory is very much an issue in the world of the public playground, especially when there is insufficient space for both genders. Then girls are grouped together at the borders of the playground or near the few play objects, whereas boys sprawl over the entire space."[183] Further, she argues that "While children of both genders are restricted, girls, in particular, experience daily constraints on their freedom of movement."[184] She uses the terms "visitor" versus "resident," referring to girls and boys respectively. This is to say that in contemporary playgrounds, boys often exhibit a sense of ownership of the space that girls do not, and boys may sometimes put conditions on girls' occupation of areas within that space. This apparently happened regularly in the playground at the CCC, particularly around the treehouse. As Bond recalls,

> Groups of boys and girls daily repeated, unbeknown to themselves, the same ideas. But one day a group found a new twist. One of the boys made a provision that girls would be allowed up on the treehouse if they first smelled the boys' feet. The girls got around that one nicely. I overheard just one whisper: 'Hold your breath and just pretend to smell them.'[185]

The power and ownership expressed by the boys in this instance put conditions on girls' use of the playground features, illustrating an example of girls' marginalization in this space. Perhaps there were also examples of girls playing similar games with the boys. Either way, what the treehouse anecdote affirms is that the playground was not a neutral space and that the children's gender impacted their relationship to Hahn Oberlander's designs.

The discrepancy between intended and actual uses of the playground in light of the notion of "gendered territory" calls into question the extent to which the design of the playground could encourage freedom. In other words, what power did Hahn Oberlander's design have to actually liberate children from the adult world? In her chapter "Architecture, Lament and Power," Catherine Ingraham notes how Bentham's panopticon is "not an embodiment of political ideology but the spatialisation of that ideology." Further, she writes:

---

[182] Ibid., 466.

[183] Ibid.

[184] Karsten, 457.

[185] Law, 31.

> While, on the one hand, I want to suggest that architecture is crucial to the spatial composition of power, I believe, on the other hand, that architecture cannot in any direct sense embody any of the things that we have traditionally thought it could embody, such as nobility, the spirit of the age, social well-being, grandeur, harmony, the grotesque, or fascism. The very idea of 'embodiment' is fraught with problems, at least one of which is the idea that there is a unidirectional movement of meaning […] from idea to object, whereas the signification of architecture seems to me to be far more oblique, far more analogical and circuitous.[186]

The obliqueness and circuitousness of architecture are part of what produces such individualized experiences amongst users. With this in mind, Hahn Oberlander's playground spatializes the ideology of a universal, creative, free, and gender-neutral childhood that inspired it, but it could never fully embody nor promise it.[187]

Traces of Desire

Related to the limited power of architecture is the notion of "chance" in spatial encounters. On this subject, Doreen Massey writes that "In spatial configurations, otherwise unconnected narratives may be brought into contact, or previously connected ones may be wrenched apart. There is always an element of 'chaos.'"[188] In *The Practice of Everyday Life*, Michel de Certeau's notion of "tactical uses of space" clarifies the element of unpredictability in spatial encounters.[189] As Fran Tonkiss notes, these tactical ways of occupying space are "unfixed and unseen" moments wherein people occupy space and time according to their own desire. She writes, "We might think of the delights that small children will find in the most commonplace spaces, the endless play of crawling backwards down stairs, balancing on the edge of walls, disappearing behind corners."[190] This element of playful use, of performing the unexpected in

---

[186] Catherine Ingraham, "Architecture, Lament and Power" in *Journal of Philosophy and the Visual Arts: Architecture, Space, Painting*, ed. by Andrew Benjamin (London, New York: The Academy Group/St. Martin's Press, 1992), 11.

[187] As I mentioned earlier in this thesis, the notion of the universal childhood is specific to the twentieth century and marks discourse surrounding modern childhoods. For more on this, see Gill Valentine, "Angels and Devils: Moral Landscapes of Childhood." *Environment and Planning. D. Society & Space* 14.5 (1996): 581–99.

[188] Doreen Massey, *For Space*, 111.

[189] Michel de Certeau, "General Introduction," in *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Rendall (Los Angeles; London: University of California Press, 1984), xi-xxiv. As cited by Fran Tonkiss, *Space, the City, and Social Theory* (Cambridge, UK; Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2005), 137-140.

[190] Tonkiss, 139.

space, is pertinent when considering some of the ways actual children defied adult expectations of their use of the playground.

One such surprise for Hill and Bond was how often girls and boys played together in the playground. Landscape architect Virginia Burt, who was six years old when she visited the playground, recalls that girls and boys played together and "had a grand time."[191] This seems to be the case in figure 47, for example, where a boy and two girls are playing together near the canal. When reflecting upon the success of the playground, Bond was most impressed by this cooperative play between strangers, in a situation which is not "self-repeating."[192] While gender proved to be a constraint for some, all children could leave their mark on the playground, be it in chalk, sand, water, or structure design. Their shoes wore away at the grass, their play spread sand far beyond the limits of the sand box (see fig. 49), and their drawings in water and chalk left temporary marks on the walls and ground.

More than mere marks, these traces signify deviation from the norm and underscore children's agency. Effectively, the children left traces of desire, shaping the space itself. As Lady Allen of Hurtwood expresses, play is an active occupation and an expression of children's desire.[193] Engaging in dynamic play and challenging stereotypes and adult expectations, children produced moments of deviation. This recalls Sara Ahmed's "queer phenomenology" wherein she describes the "queer moment" as what happens when one resists the "field of heterosexual objects" and deviates from the grid of heteronormativity.[194] It is a moment of "disorientation," a moment when one feels at odds with the world that is already firmly in place around them.[195] Because the playground was designed with diverse children in mind, with diverging interests and abilities, it permitted a wide range of interactions. However, the underlying substructure of heteronormativity impacts how children behave and interact in public spaces. One way of countering this, as Hahn Oberlander imagined, is to provide as many opportunities for

---

[191] Virgina Burt, email to author, January 3rd, 2016.

[192] Law, 31.

[193] Allen, *Planning for Play*, 11.

[194] Sara Ahmed, "Orientations: Toward a Queer Phenomenology," *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 12.4 (2006): 558; 565.

[195] Ibid., 565.

experimental play as possible. Even today, this seems the most effective means of challenging harmful gender stereotypes. As Carrie Paechter and Sheryl Clark write,

> If we want children, both boys and girls, to have a wide range of possibilities concerning how they think about themselves and who they can be, we need to provide playgrounds that enable a wide variety of play activities, and which do not allow particular forms of masculinity to dominate the available space. This requires…that we consider how children use those spaces, and what the implications of this use are for their self-constructions as masculine and feminine.[196]

This is to say that the playground is an arena wherein children rehearse and form their identities. Although Hahn Oberlander's playground for Expo 67 gave space to gendered experiences, it also gave ample space to challenge the gendered nature of play.

Memory's Place

For Burt, the playground at the CCC evidently induces joyful memories. After all, as Hahn Oberlander stated, "The excitement of Expo '67 was tremendous, and everybody came away happy who had visited it."[197] Keith Daniel, for one, states that he has returned to the site of the playground a few times, even considering the site "sacred."[198] Having visited the playground many times throughout the summer of 1967 as a child, Daniel seems to have developed a rapport with the space. This relationship has led to an ongoing, active interest in the site of the playground, which has manifested in the form of contributions to social media sites and fan groups, and site research. Gabriel Jacob, one of the more active members of the public "Expo 67" Facebook group, has located the approximate site of the playground. In the caption to a photograph of the playground that he has posted on social media (fig. 29), Jacob notes that the railing above the CCC is the last remaining on the Expo 67 site today.[199] The before and after images and anecdotes of returns to the islands of Expo 67 show how the site exists as palimpsest, as bearing visible traces of the events of 1967.

This broader context situates the playground not only as a space but also as a *place*, an area one can locate on a map. As Barry Curtis writes, places are constituted by relationships,

---

[196] Carrie Paechter and Sheryl Clark "Learning Gender in Primary School Playgrounds: Findings from the Tomboy Identities Study." *Culture & Society* 15.3(2007): 330.

[197] Hahn Oberlander, interview with Charles Birnbaum.

[198] Keith Daniel, comment in "Expo 67" public Facebook group, October 3rd, 2016.

[199] Gabriel Jacob, Photo caption in "Expo 67" public Facebook group, June 28th, 2016.

"part subjective projection, part internalization of an external activity."[200] Engaging with various aspects of the Expo 67 site, from building plans, to photographs, to video materials, these men have created a sort of heterotopia, an archive of sorts.[201] Does the fact that this is happening online somehow destabilize the place of the Expo 67 playground? While in 2001, Curtis pondered whether electronic modes of communication would "reinforce 'placelessness' or stimulate a recognition of a place's importance," I believe that communities like the Facebook group strengthen the sense of Expo 67's "place."[202] Given the Expo 67 Facebook group's ever-growing membership, approaching 4000 members this winter of 2017, and researchers' use of the group for academic and curatorial projects, it has arguably facilitated a deeper engagement with Expo 67, and indeed, Cornelia Hahn Oberlander's playground itself.

Underscoring this engagement is the *imageability* of the playground. Here I am borrowing the term coined by Kevin Lynch, who describes it as "that quality in a physical object which gives it a high probability of evoking a strong image in any given observer."[203] The photographs of the playground shared in the Facebook group always receive comments and "likes" from members. Memory here is essential in the place-making of the playground, yet as Curtis states, it is important to acknowledge how it is "subject to political as well as psychic operations" and "rarely without contradictions."[204] I wonder the extent to which the oft-circulated photographs of the playground (namely, figs. 22-23) have transformed the memory of those who recall playing there. That is, although the photograph is a useful memory aid, for Roland Barthes it "actually blocks memory, quickly becomes a counter-memory…fill[ing] the sight by force."[205] After all, 50 years is a long time, as my interview subjects often reminded me.

---

[200] Barry Curtis, "That Place Where: Some Thoughts on Memory and the City," in *The Unknown City: Contesting Architecture and Social Space : A Strangely Familiar Project* (Cambridge, MA: MIT, 2001): 56.

[201] In "Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias," *Architecture/Mouvement/Continuité*, trans. Jay Miskowiec (October 1984): 6, Michel Foucault defines the heterotopia as "juxtaposing in a single real place several spaces, several sites that are in themselves incompatible." Examples of heterotopias are cemeteries, archives, and libraries.

[202] Ibid., 60.

[203] Kevin Lynch, *The Image of the City* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1960), 9.

[204] Curtis, "That Place Where," 64; 65.

[205] Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 2010), 91.

Concluding this thesis with the playground's use gives the last word to those who inhabited the space. While I do not pretend to present a comprehensive account of the playground's use in this chapter, calling attention to the notion of "freedom" and complicating it allows me to offer a counter-narrative to how the playground had been described by the press. Without question, the playground provided diverse play opportunities for boys and girls. While girls were marginalized, they also seem to have worked around this. They climbed the rope ladder, they built houses, they played with and without boys. Ultimately, this chapter opened up space for the voices of those who shaped the playground from the inside. Interweaving accounts from 1967 with those from the present, this chapter also explored the playground's *imageability*. If, as Tonkiss argues, "urban spaces make excellent contexts for thinking about how gender works," and I choose to consider the playground as an urban space (it was, after all, designed for the "city child"), this chapter illuminates more than just gendered experiences in this specific playground. Rather, it reveals an instance of how children embody and engage with socially constructed ideas and practices, participating in the social world of adults.

CONCLUSION

According to Hill, many children were upset when their parents said they had to leave the playground. Burt was one of these children, recalling that she cried when her parents encouraged her to go inside: "My dad remembers trying to get me out of the dory. I didn't want to leave the dory! I loved being on the water."[206] I imagine her looking a little bit like the little girl in the red coat in figure 48, perfectly comfortable and content in the yellow boat. Burt describes the playground as "bright" and fun, recalling that it made her feel safe and adventurous.[207] While she does not remember the one-way glass or the adults lining the railing above, other children did, such as one Facebook user who recalls that their parents could watch them, comparing it to a zoo.[208] At a certain point, Keith Daniel also figured out the one-way glass, expressing that he used to cup his hands on the glass to see if his parents were watching.[209] He describes his experience at the CCC with great enthusiasm: "Spent many a happy hour there as a 7 year old. Climbing, building, making noise, making instant friends."[210]

While all children had to leave Expo 67 eventually and the playground was dismantled after the event's closing on October 29th, 1967, it is clear that many traces remain. Manifest in testimonies, photographs, and Hahn Oberlander's archive at the Canadian Centre for Architecture, these traces allow for new encounters and underscore the power of its image. Yet not all traces are visible or publicly available. When Doreen Massey describes her proposition that space is always under construction, she states, "Perhaps we could imagine space as a simultaneity of stories-so-far."[211] Indeed, the best this thesis can do is to offer an account of traces and ideas encountered thus far. When describing the formative potential of play, Lady Allen of Hurtwood writes that "At its best, play is a kind of research."[212] What I have learned through the

---

[206] Burt.

[207] Burt.

[208] Lidy Fraser, Comment in "Expo 67" public Facebook Group, November 7th, 2016.

[209] Keith Daniel, comment in "Expo 67" public Facebook group, October 3rd, 2016.

[210] Ibid.

[211] Doreen Massey, *For Space*, 9.

[212] Allen, *Planning for Play*, 11.

process of writing this thesis is that research itself ought to be a kind of play – active, creative, collaborative, and most of all, pleasurable.

This thesis had two principal goals. The first was to adequately represent the playground's design complexities, illuminating Hahn Oberlander's process and vision. The second was to counter the notion that it was a neutral space, underscoring how it was used and encountered by children and adults. While discourse surrounding childhood pedagogy in mid-century North America often avoids the subject of gender, it is clear that gendered experiences are possible even in spaces designed to be neutral and non-prescriptive. Although this thesis, like Hahn Oberlander's playground, privileged the child, my hope is that by calling attention to adult intentions and deconstructing some of the myths of mid-century childhood, I avoided reifying the Child.[213] To reify the category of the Child is to give space to a harmful myth, one that does a disservice to all children, who will never match the ideal child. As Gill Valentine writes, "The experience of childhood has never been universal; rather, what it means to be a particular age intersects with other identities so that experiences of poverty, disability, ill health, being orphaned, taken into care, or having to look after a sick parent have all denied many children this idealised time of innocence and dependence."[214] This thesis could not delve so deeply into the lives of those who played in Hahn Oberlander's playground. Instead, the best it could do was confront its image and challenge its dominant narratives through careful visual analysis. Challenging the myth of universal childhood also opens up critiques of other myths described in this thesis: those of Canadianness, biological essentialism, and the neutrality of modernist design. Effectively, this thesis offered a counter-narrative to the universalist discourse that marked Expo 67 via a small yet powerful piece of this world's fair.

As I return to the note of semi-centennial celebration that opened this thesis, I reflect upon the following questions: what does Hahn Oberlander's playground mean today and how did its forward-looking ambitions play out over the last fifty years? It certainly did not anticipate the playground landscape of the future; most North American playgrounds continue to be static sites with anchored equipment in artificial materials, the very typology that Hahn Oberlander

[213] Here I am referring to the imagined Child as described by Lee Edelman in "The Future is Kid Stuff," in *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2004), 1-32.

[214] Gill Valentine, "Angels and Devils," 587.

resisted. However, her playground did anticipate a movement. The story of the playground as told here is not complete, nor is it over. In fact, Hahn Oberlander's playground design offers a formidable example to those wishing to work with the adventure playground model today, be they architects, artists, or educators.[215]

Roy Kozlovsky writes that although the social conditions have changed since the time of the original adventure playgrounds in Postwar Europe, the playground model's "continuing appeal to child advocates, artists and social critics suggests that it has the potential to critically reflect upon the contemporary predicament of childhood and play."[216] Indeed, as memories of Expo 67 resurface on social media and the "adventure play" movement gains ever more momentum in North America, it even seems an adventure playground might appear in Montreal again.[217] At the very least, a group of us are intent on making it happen.[218] Thanks to the work of the community organization "Le Lion et la souris," pop-up adventure playgrounds have appeared in Montreal in the Champ des Possibles, Mount-Royal Park, Le Village au Pied-du-Courant, and beyond, affording all children dynamic play opportunities. The first step to setting up a permanent playground, of course, is to advocate for adventure play and build interest in the adventure playground model anew. Based on the conversations and meetings in which I have

---

[215] As previously mentioned, Youki Cropas wrote a report using Hahn Oberlander's playground as a model for contemporary playspace design. Leisure Projects (Meredith Carruthers and Susannah Wesley) are also responding to the playground in work that will be shown at the Montreal Museum of Contemporary Art in the exhibition *In Search of Expo 67*, on display from June 21 to October 8, 2017. Meanwhile, an adventure playground in Central Park in New York City, designed by Richard Dattner in 1966, has also served as inspiration for Julia Jacquette's contemporary art practice (see Daniel McDermon, "The Secret Art Language of New York Playgrounds" *The New York Times*, March 15, 2017, https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/15/arts/design/julia-jacquette-playground-art.html?_r=1).

[216] Roy Kozlovsky, *The Architectures of Childhood: Children, Modern Architecture and Reconstruction in Postwar England* (London and New York: Routledge, 2016), 91.

[217] Part of the momentum of the movement is thanks to the work of Morgan Leichter-Saxby and Suzanna Law, who run the UK-based charity "Pop-Up Adventure Play." They held their first conference, the Playwork Campference, in Val Verde, California from February 16-19, 2017. It is also worth noting that there was an adventure playground in the Montreal neighbourhood of Pointe-Saint-Charles in the early 1970s, initiated by students Joe Carter and Pieter Sijpkes (see *Adventure Playgrounds / Green Thumbs, Sore Thumbs*, Project Report, [Pointe-Saint-Charles, Montreal, 1972]: http://www.arch.mcgill.ca/prof/sijpkes/adventure_playgrounds.pdf.).

[218] By "us," I mean the educators, architects, and parents working alongside the efforts of Le lion et la souris, a non-profit in Montreal committed to establishing more play opportunities with loose parts and in nature in the city. Amongst us are architect Youki Cropas and co-founder of Le lion et la souris Megan Cohoe-Kenney. The work of Lady Allen of Hurtwood, Polly Hill, and Cornelia Hahn Oberlander are certainly influential to us as we discuss the future of adventure play in Montreal.

participated in these last few months, I have no idea what this space will look like and only have dreams of where it could be. All I can hope is that, like Hahn Oberlander's adventure playgrounds, it will be accessible, ever-growing, and messy: a space for all children to call their own.

Figure 1.
Official Map of the Expo 67 site.
c.1967. Map.

Source: *Plan souvenir officiel Expo 67 : 28 avril-27 octobre 1967, Montréal, Canada* (April 28-October 27, 1967, Montreal, Canada. Toronto ; Montreal ; Vancouver ; Calgary ; London (Eng.) ; Chicago : Maclean-Hunter, c1967). Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montréal.

Figure 2.
Children's World, La Ronde, Expo 67
FOS Productions. 1967. Photograph.

Source: FOS Productions, via Expo Lounge. http://expolounge.blogspot.ca/2006/08/la-ronde.html.

Figure 3.
Children's World, La Ronde, Expo 67.
Photographer unknown. 1967. Photograph.

Source: Courtesy of Martin Wohlgemuth, via the public "Expo 67" Facebook group.

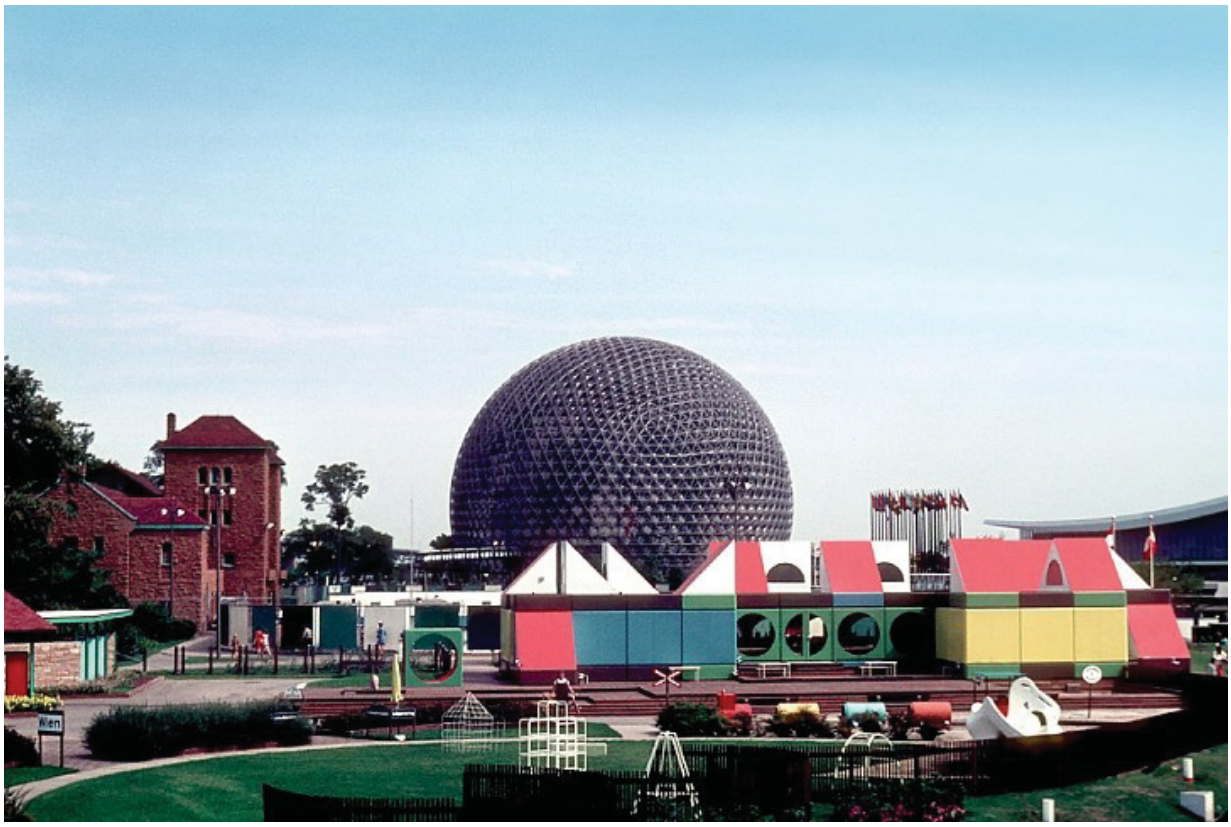


Figure 4.
View of the play-yard and building of the Vienna Kindergarten at Expo 67.
Bill Cotter. 1967. Photograph.

Source: Courtesy of Bill Cotter.

Figure 5.
Children playing with large cube blocks in primary colours at the Vienna Kindergarten, Expo 67. Photographer Unknown. 1967. Photograph.

Source: The Dixon Slide Collection, McGill University.

Figures 6-7
Left; *Girl climbing the 'Concordia' sculpture by Elza Mayhew, Expo 67.*
Roger Laroche. 1967. Photograph.

Right; *Boy touching the 'Sinnende' sculpture by Wilhem Lehmbruck, Expo 67.*
Roger Laroche. 1967. Photograph.

Sources: Courtesy of Roger Laroche.

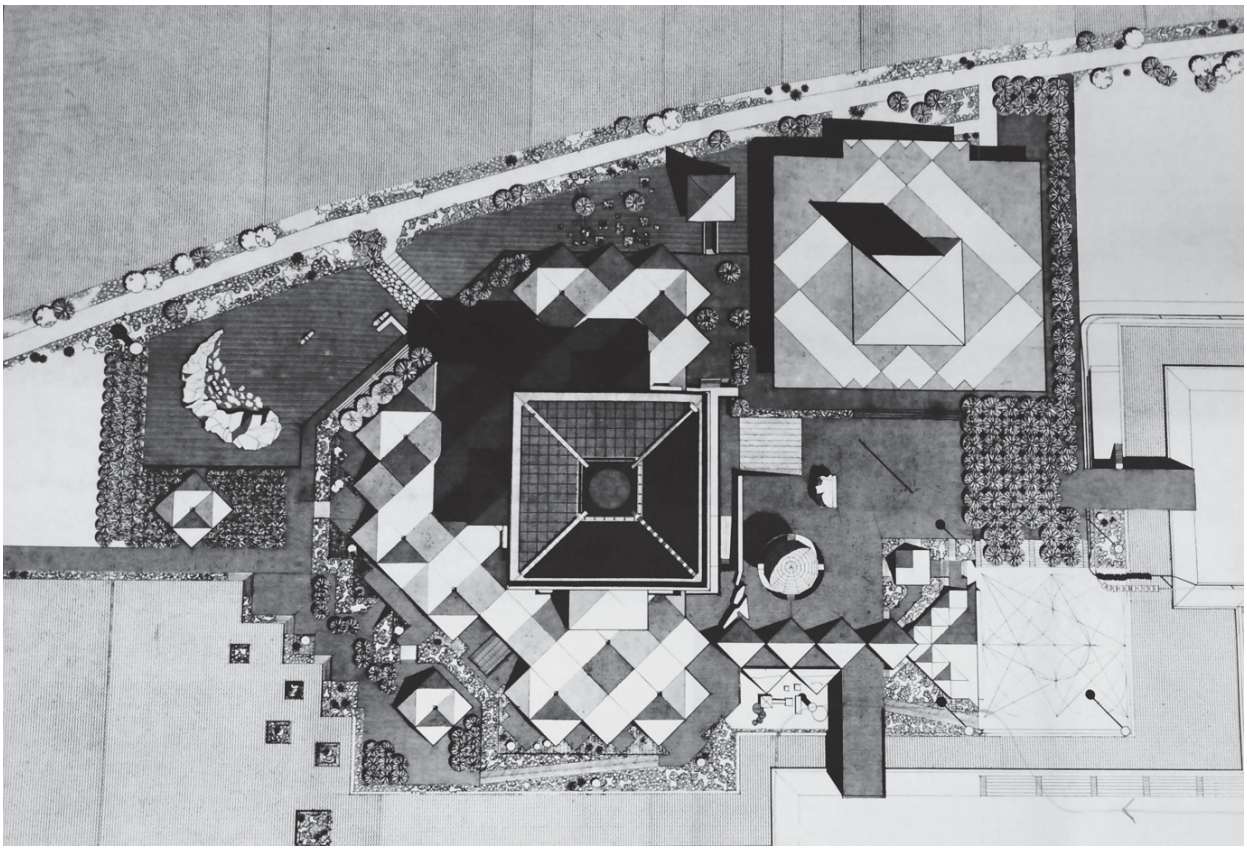


Figure 8.
Site plan for the Canadian Pavilion, Expo 67.
Fred Ashworth, Paul Schoeler, Brian Barkham, Z. Matthew Staniewicz, Rod Robbie, Colin Vaughan, and Richard Williams. 1967. Architectural drawing.

Source: Cornelia Hahn Oberlander fonds, Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montréal; Gift of Cornelia Hahn Oberlander. AP075.S1.D001, Playground for Children's Creative Centre, Canadian Federal Pavilion, Expo '67, 1965-1967.

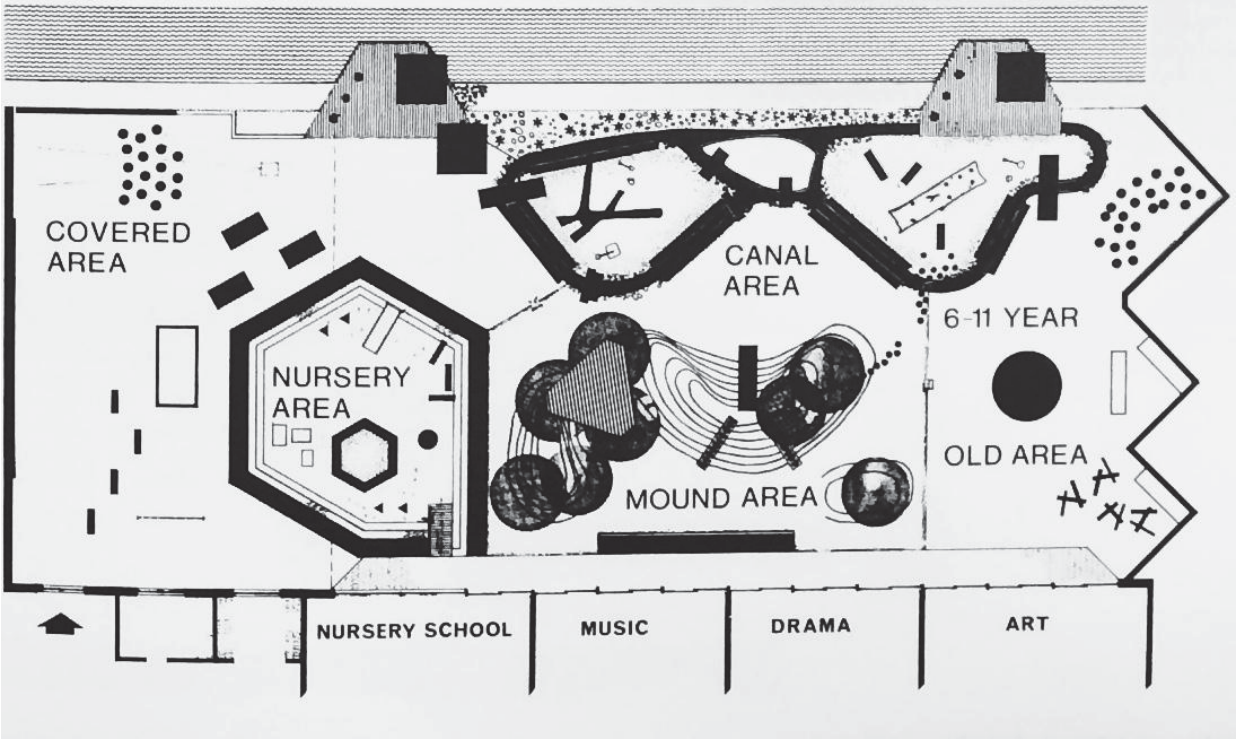


Figure 9.
Plan of the Playground, Children's Creative Centre, Canadian Federal Pavilion, Expo 67.
Cornelia Hahn Oberlander. 1966. Architectural drawing.

Source: Cornelia Hahn Oberlander, "Space for Creative Play," *The Canadian Landscape Architect* (1966): 17.

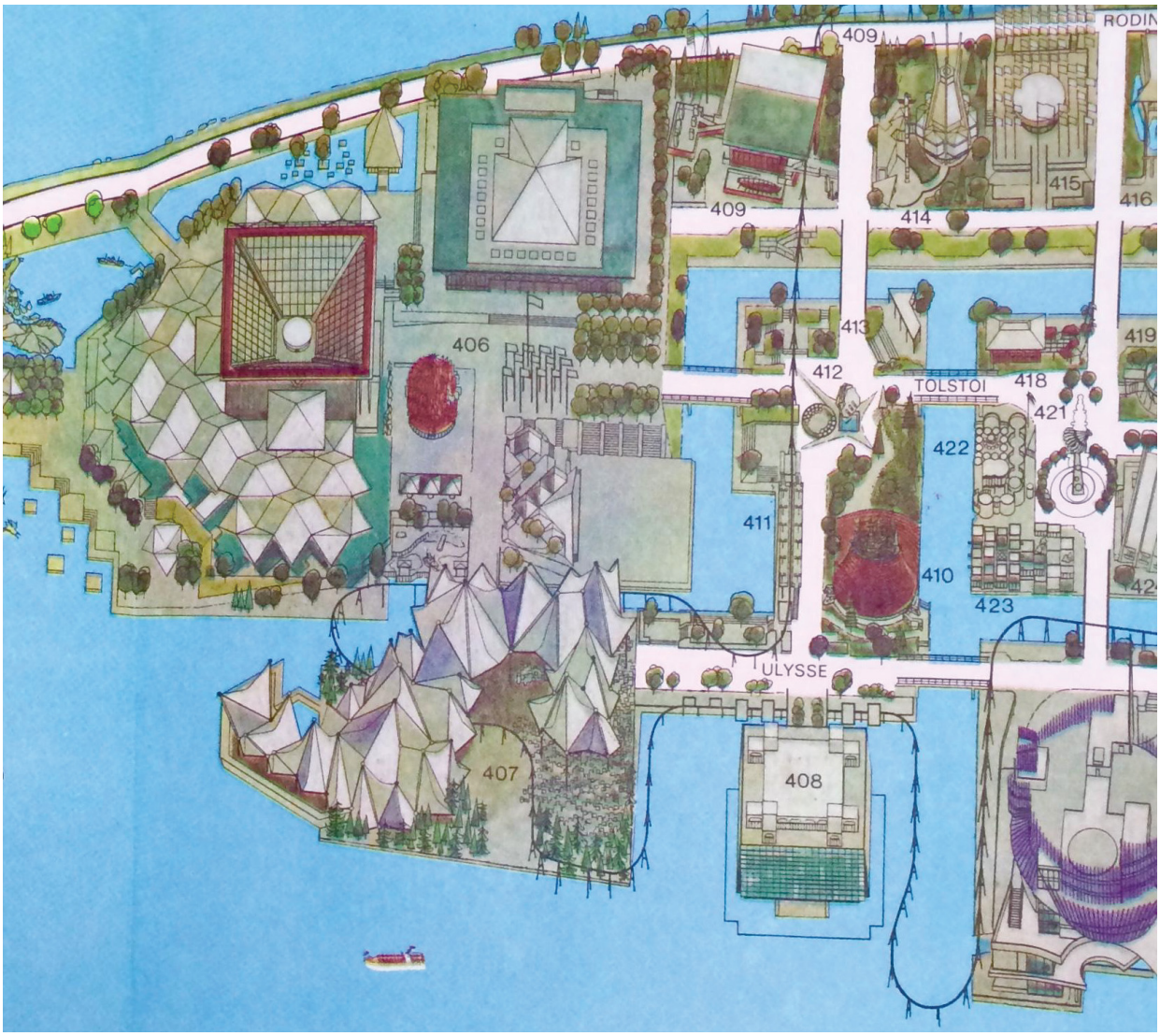


Figure 10.
Detail of Notre Dame Island, official map of the Expo 67 site.
c.1967. Map.

The Canadian Pavilion area is marked by "406." The playground is located below the people tree, the red spherical building left of centre.

Source: *Plan souvenir officiel Expo 67 : 28 avril-27 octobre 1967, Montréal, Canada* (April 28-October 27, 1967, Montreal, Canada. Toronto ; Montreal ; Vancouver ; Calgary ; London (Eng.) ; Chicago : Maclean-Hunter, c1967). Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montréal.

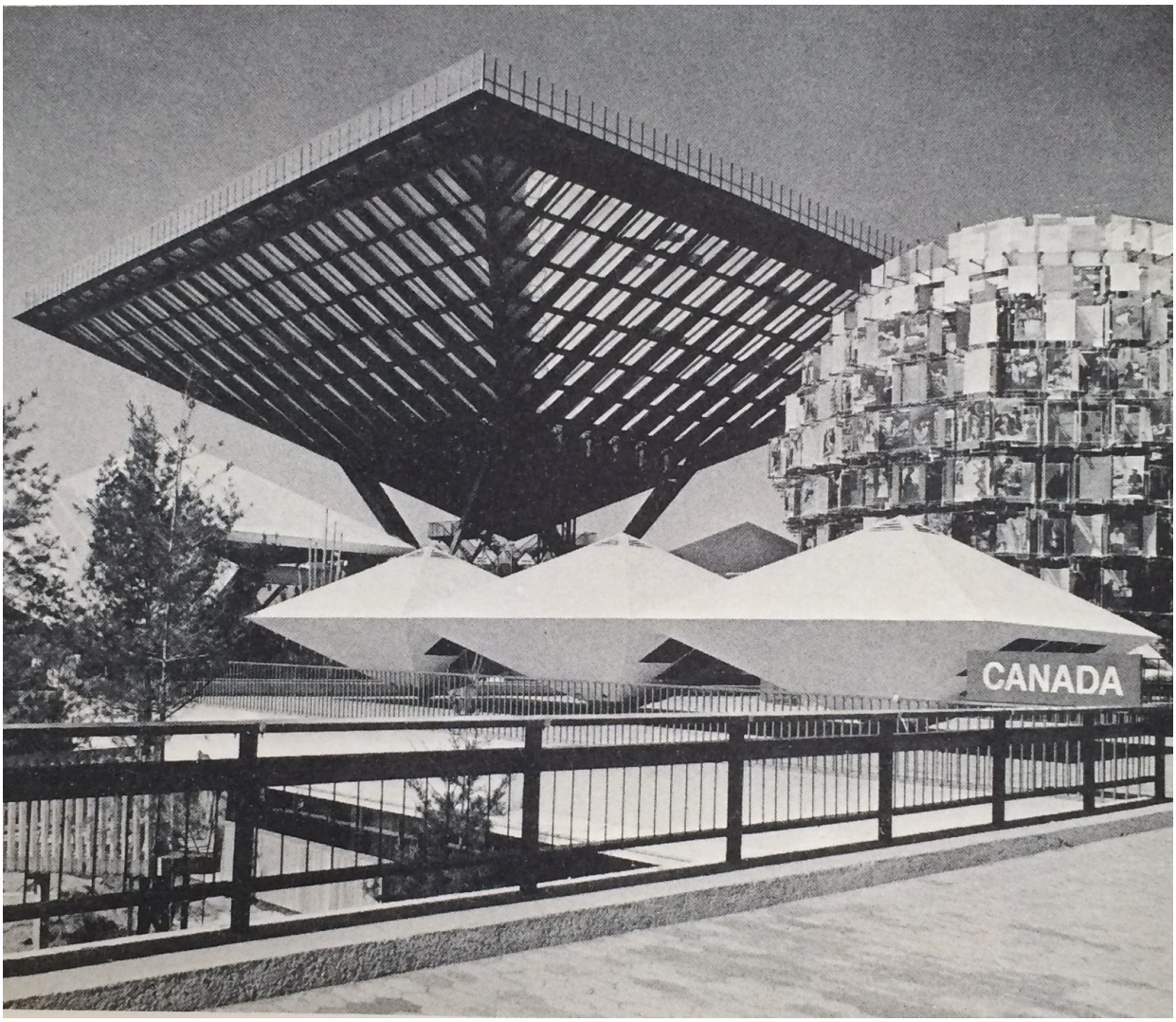


Figure 11.
The Canadian Pavilion, with playground in bottom left corner, and Katimavik and People tree in the background, Expo 67.
Photographer unknown. 1967. Photograph.

Source : *Architecture et sculpture au Canada* (Montreal: Le Pavillon du Canada, Expo 67, 1967).

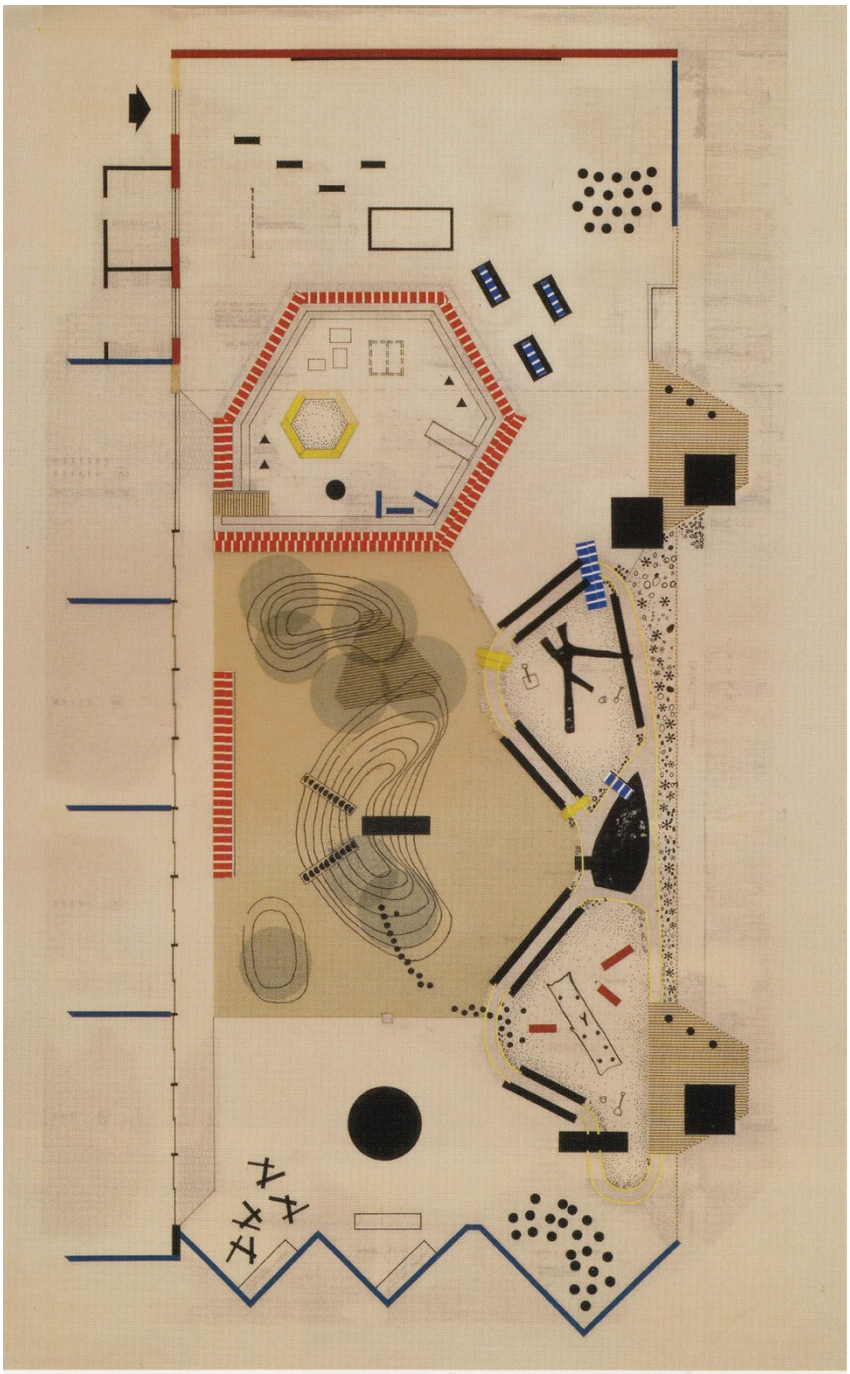


Figure 12.
Plan of the playground, Children's Creative Centre, Canadian Pavilion, Expo 67.
Cornelia Hahn Oberlander. 1965. Architectural drawing.

Source: Cornelia Hahn Oberlander fonds, Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montréal; Gift of Cornelia Hahn Oberlander. AP075.S1.D001, Playground for Children's Creative Centre, Canadian Federal Pavilion, Expo '67, 1965-1967.

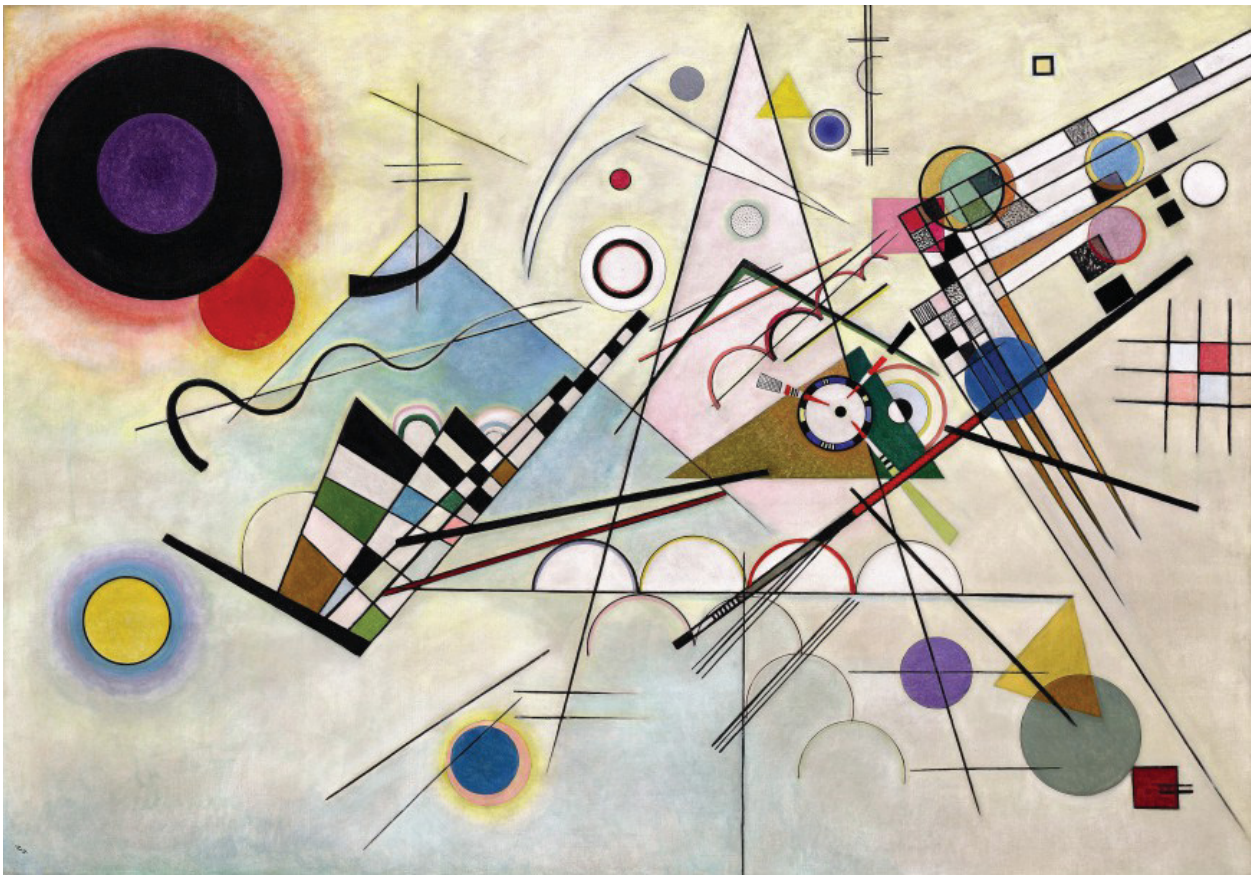


Figure 13.
Composition VIII.
Vasily Kandinsky. July 1923. Oil on canvas.

Source: Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York. Solomon R. Guggenheim Founding Collection, By gift.

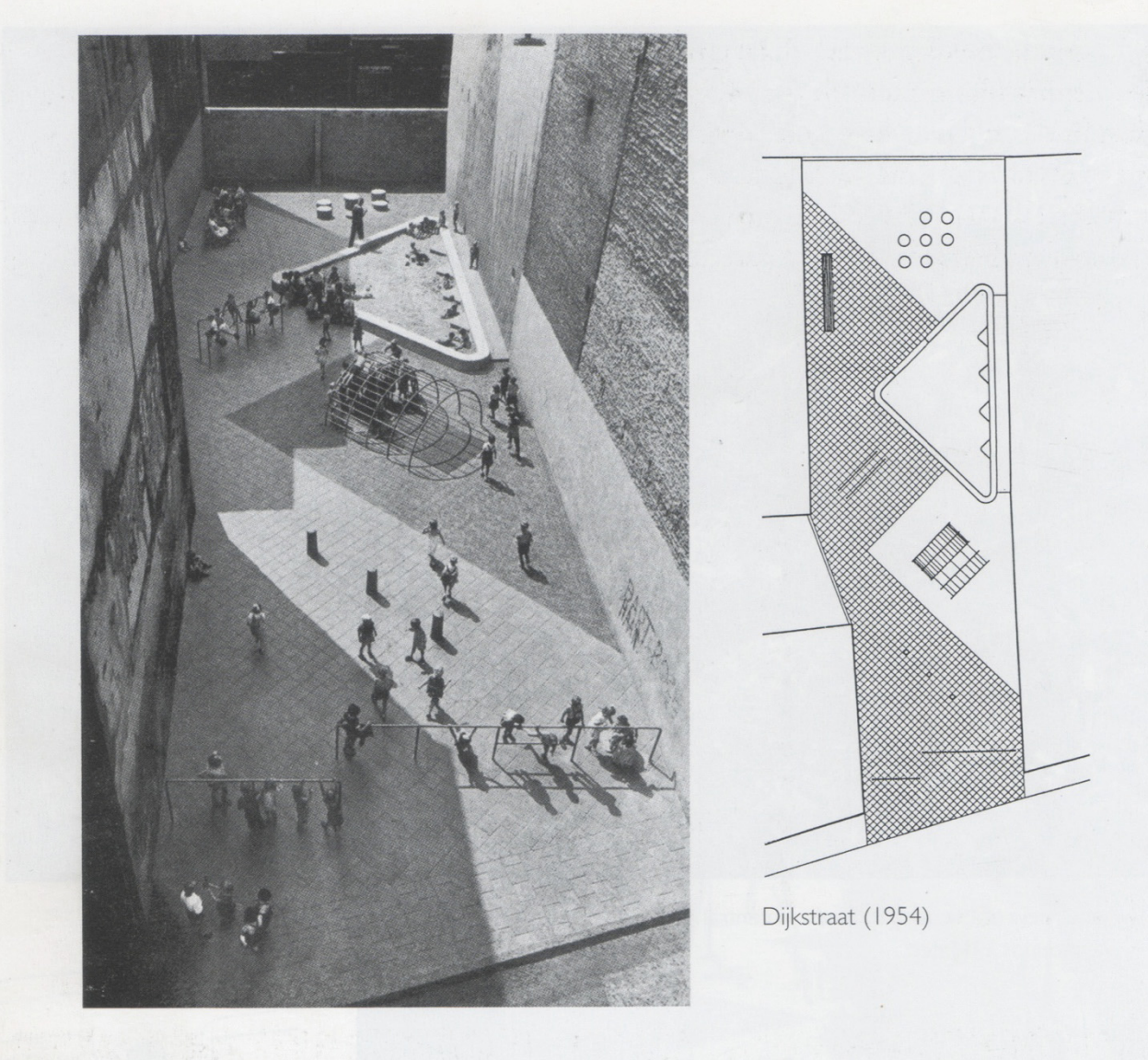


Figure 14.
Aldo van Eyck's Dijkstraat Playground.
Gemeentelijke Archiefdienst Amsterdam. ca. 1954. Photograph and plan.

Source: Francis Strauven, *Aldo Van Eyck: The Shape of Relativity* (Amsterdam: Architectura & Natura, 1998).

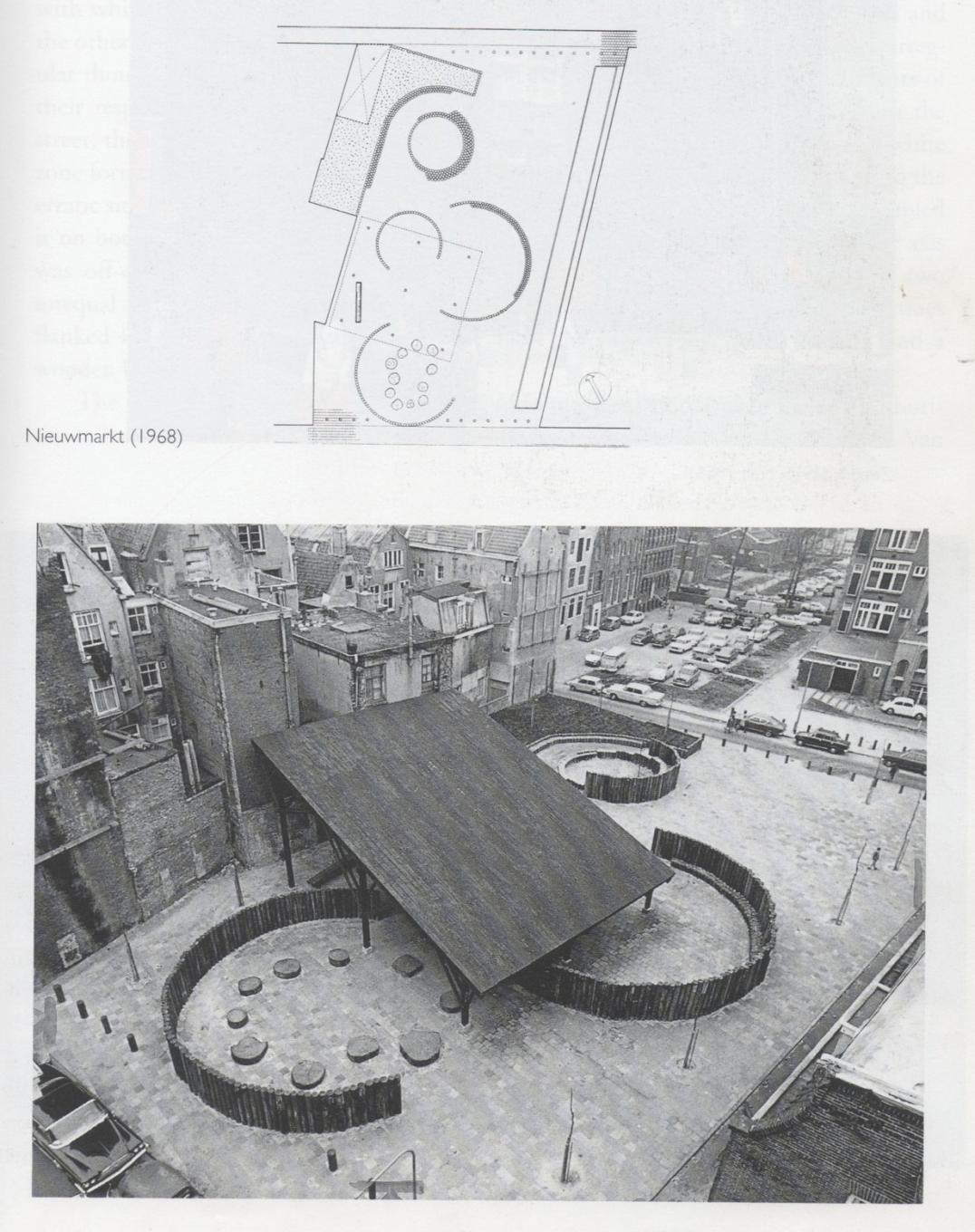
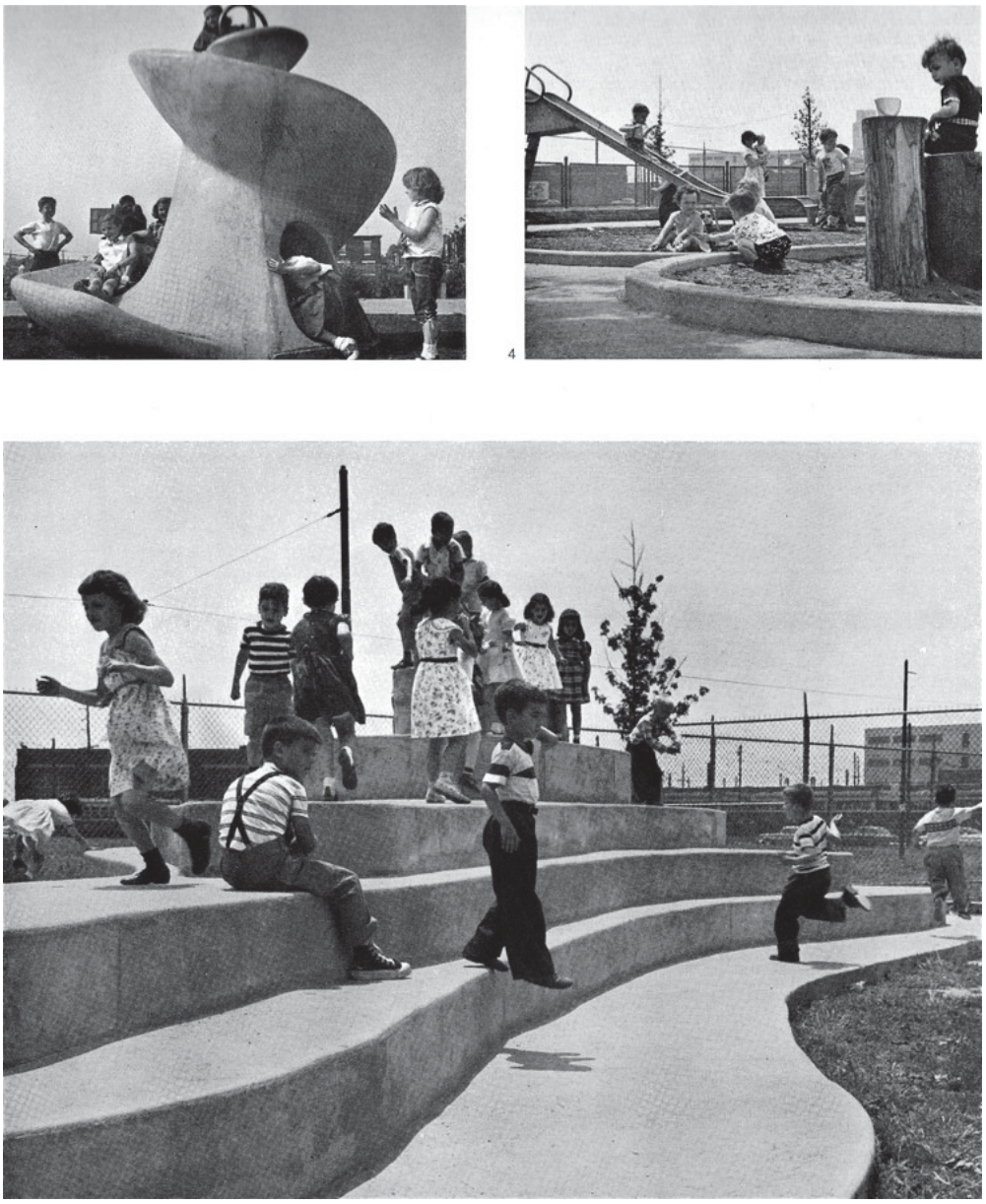


Figure 15.
Aldo van Eyck's Nieuwmarkt playground.
P. Boersma. ca. 1968. Photograph and plan.

Source: Francis Strauven, *Aldo Van Eyck: The Shape of Relativity* (Amsterdam: Architectura & Natura, 1998).



Figures 16-18.
Top left; *Sculpture by Egon Moeller-Nielsen in the 18th Street and Bigler Street Playground, Philadelphia*. Photographer Unknown. 1954. Photograph.

Top right; *Slide and sand area, 18th Street and Bigler Street Playground, Philadelphia*. Photographer Unknown. 1954. Photograph.

Bottom; *"Goat Mountain," 18th Street and Bigler Street Playground, Philadelphia*. Photographer Unknown. 1954. Photograph.

Source: Alfred Ledermann and Alfred Trachsel, *Spielplatz und Gemeinschaftszentrum* (Stuttgart: Gerd Hatje Verlag, 1959).

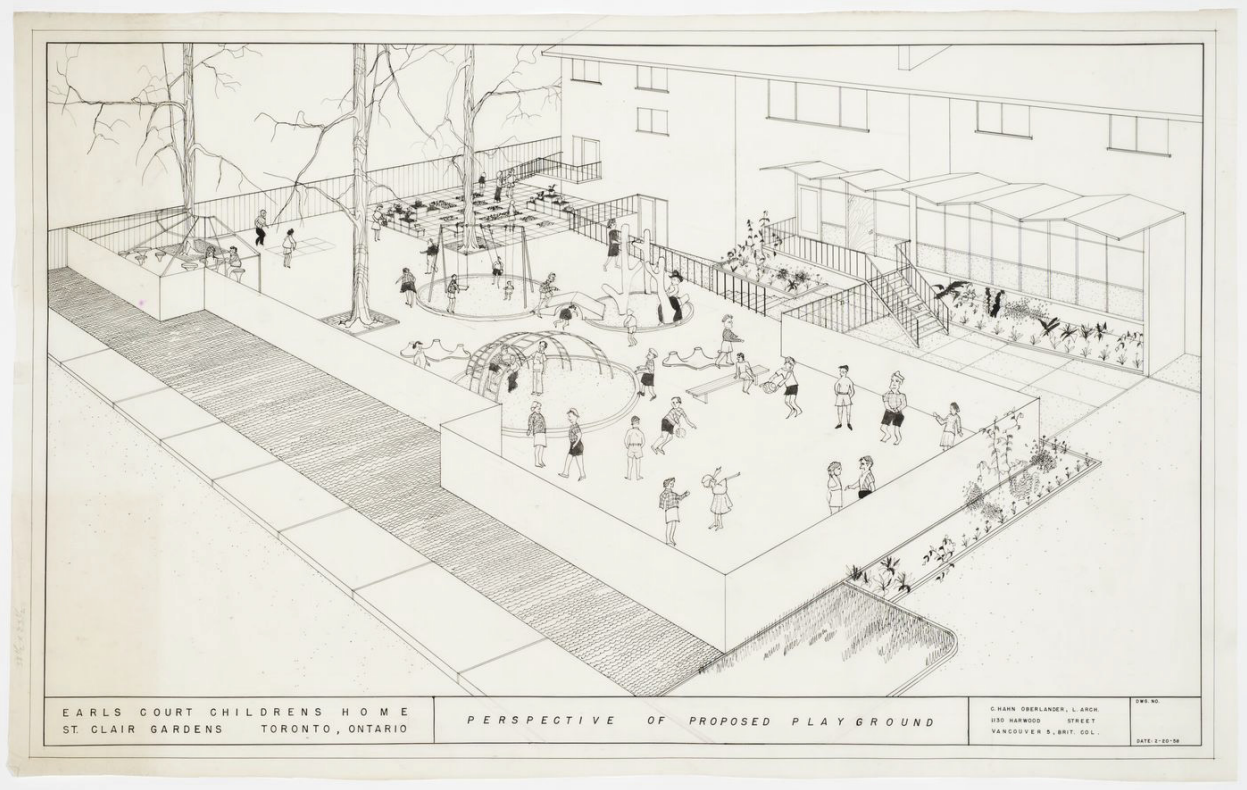


Figure 19.
Proposed playground, Earl's Court Children's Home, Toronto.
Cornelia Hahn Oberlander. 1958. Architectural drawing.

Source: Cornelia Hahn Oberlander fonds, Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montréal; Gift of Cornelia Hahn Oberlander. AP075.S1.D032.P012, Earl's Court Children's Home, St. Clair Gardens, 1958.

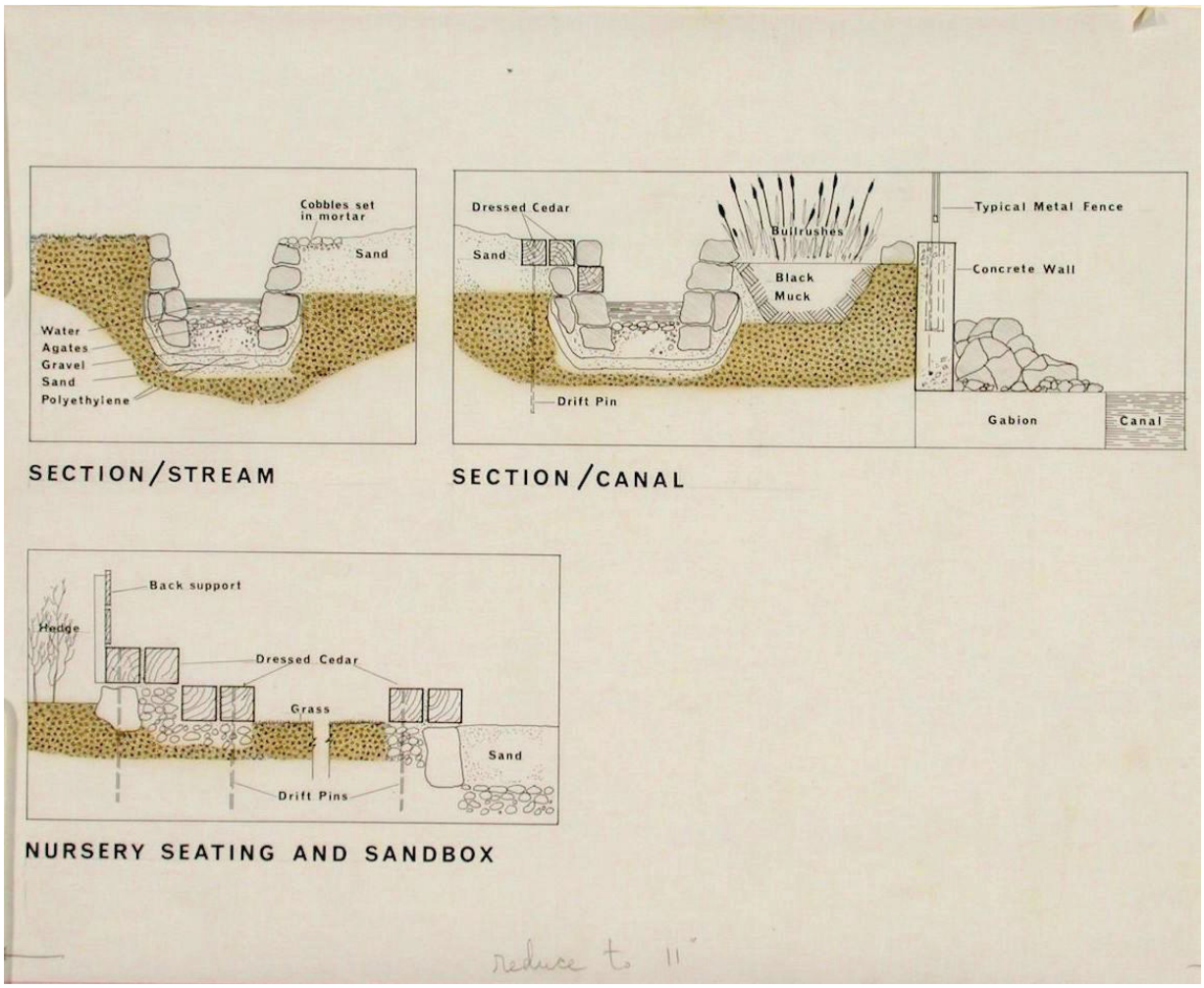


Figure 20.
Section drawing of the design by the fence in the playground, *Children's Creative Centre, Expo 67*. Cornelia Hahn Oberlander. 1965-1967. Architectural drawing.

Source: Cornelia Hahn Oberlander fonds, Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montréal; Gift of Cornelia Hahn Oberlander. 75-0022-15 M, AP075.S1.D001.P025.

Figure 21.
Boy on rope ladder in playground, Children's Creative Centre, Expo 67.
Jeff Goode. August 8th, 1967. Photograph.

Caption: "No boy can resist the rope ladder climb to the tree house in the older children's playground at the Canadian Creative Centre at Expo. Playground; which was designed by Cornelia Hahn Oberlander; Vancouver; includes stream."

Source: Centennial – Expo – Visitors, Toronto Star Archives. Baldwin Collection, Toronto Reference Library, call number tspa_0004412f.

Figure 22.
Children in the dory in the playground's canal, Children's Creative Centre, Expo 67.
Photographer Unknown. 1967. Photograph.

Source: Cornelia Hahn Oberlander fonds, Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montréal; Gift of Cornelia Hahn Oberlander. AP075.S1.D001, Playground for Children's Creative Centre, Canadian Federal Pavilion, Expo '67, 1965-1967.

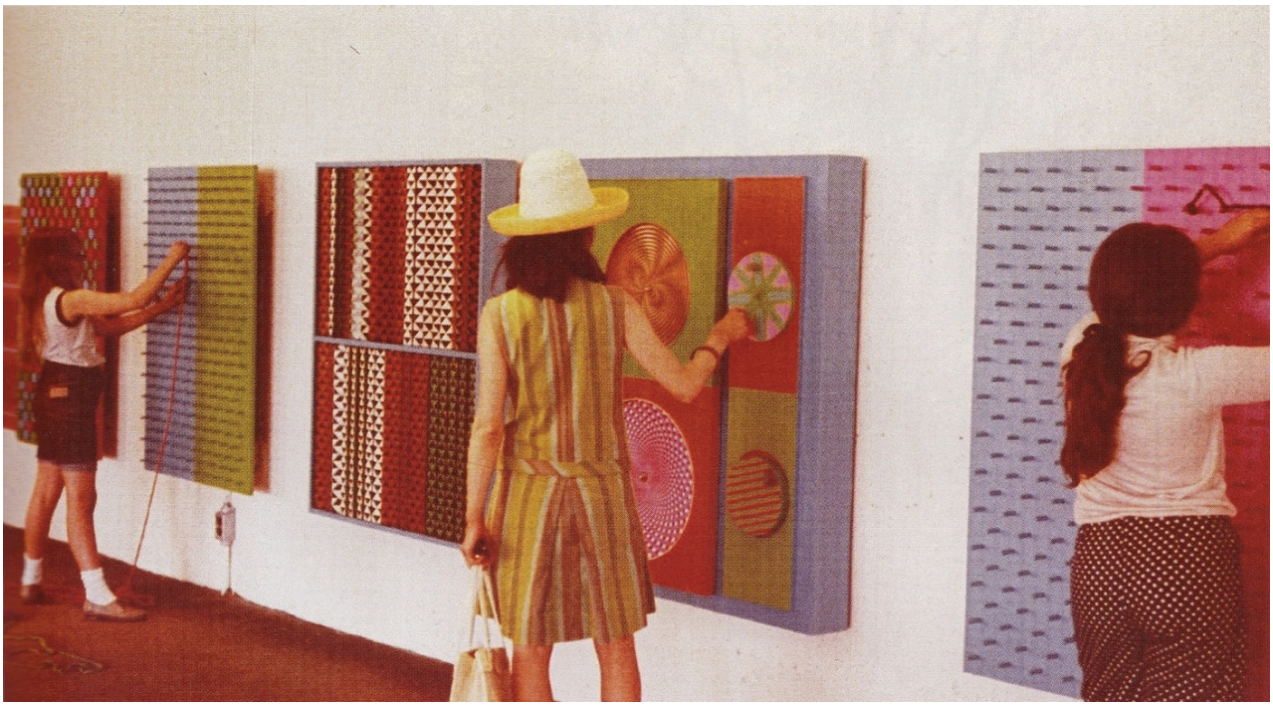


Figure 23.
Girls playing with Gordon Smith's Op-Art Screens, Children's Creative Centre, Expo 67.
Photographer Unknown. 1967. Photograph.

Source: Susan Herrington, *Cornelia Hahn Oberlander: Making the Modern Landscape* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2013).

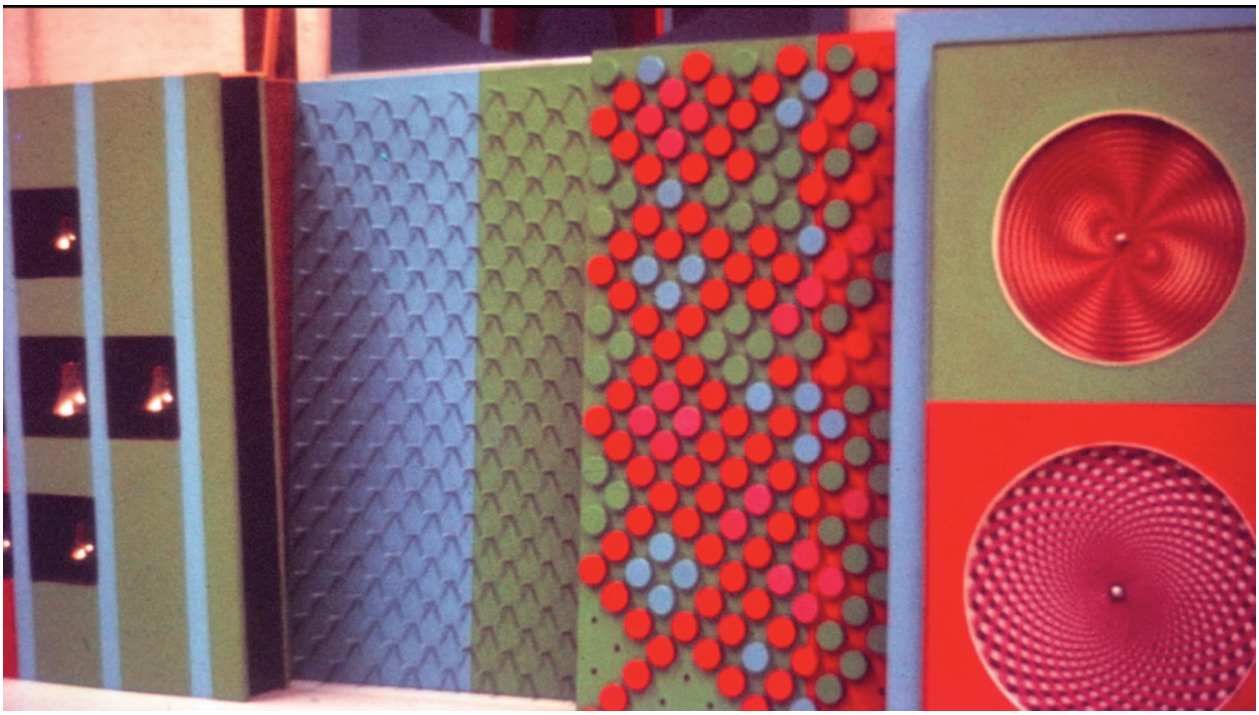


Figure 24.
Close-up of some of the Op-Art screens, Children's Creative Centre, Expo 67.
Photographer Unknown. 1967. Photograph.

Source: Courtesy of Cornelia Hahn Oberlander.

Figure 25.
Canadian Pulp and Paper Industry Pavilion.
Photographer Unknown. 1967. Photograph.

Source: Library and Archives Canada, MIKAN 3198368.

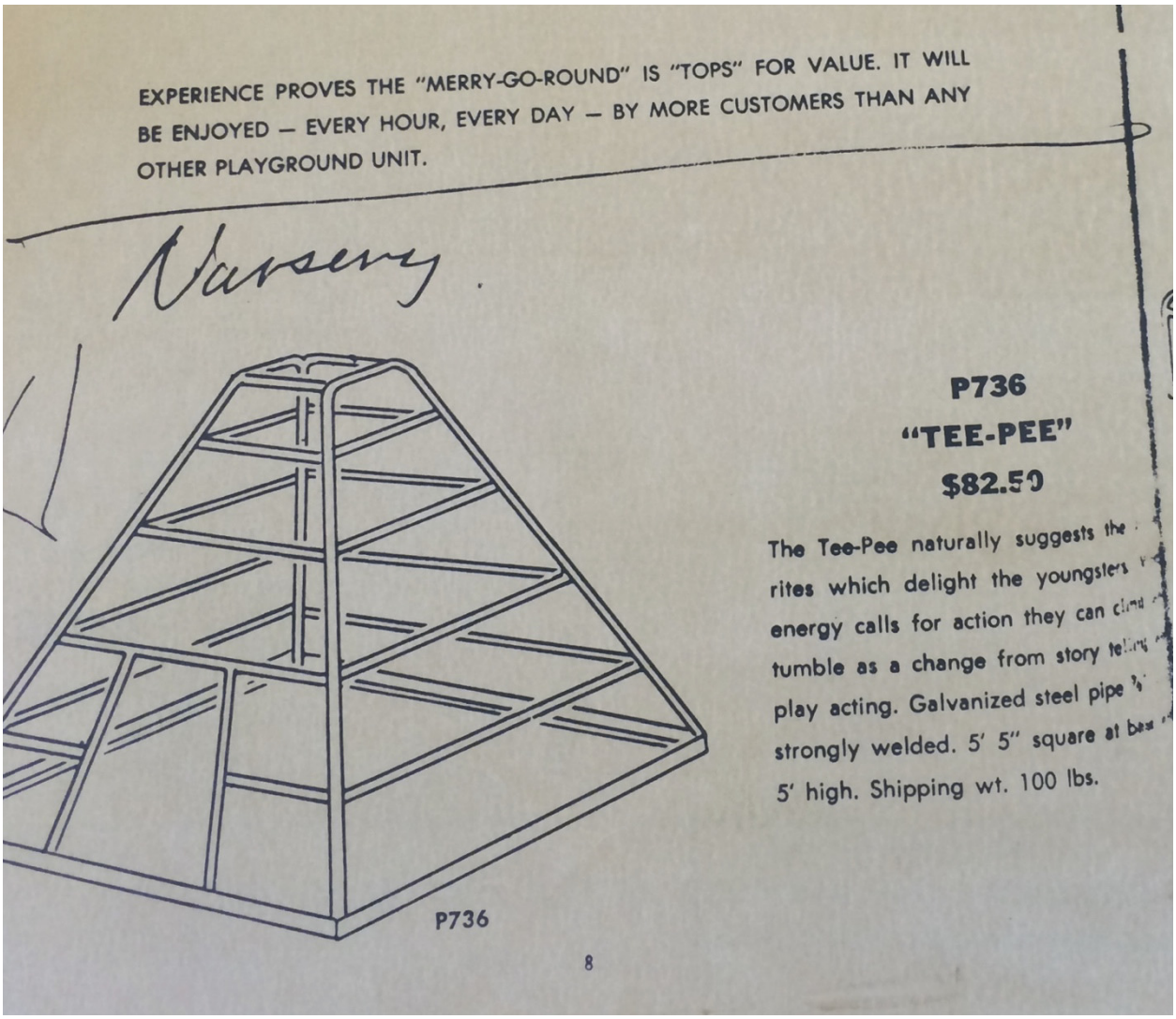


Figure 26.
"Tee-Pee" climbing structure, as advertised in a catalogue.
Date unknown. Catalogue entry.

Source: Library and Archives Canada, RG 20, Vol. 1887, File 4-3-10-5.

Figure 27.
Indians of Canada Pavilion, *Expo 67.*
Laurent Bélanger. May 1967. Photograph.

Source: Wikimedia (Creative Commons License).

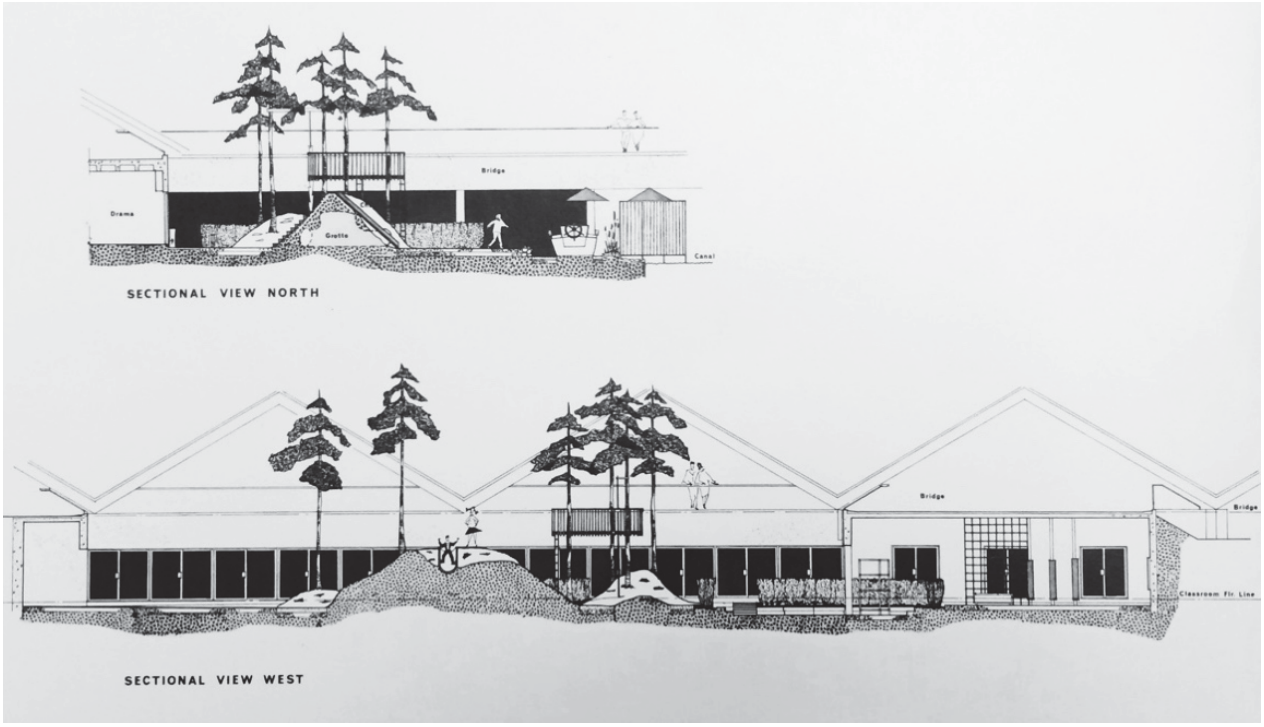


Figure 28.
Section drawing of the playground, Children's Creative Centre, Expo 67.
Cornelia Hahn Oberlander. 1965-1967. Architectural drawing.

Source: Cornelia Hahn Oberlander fonds, Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montréal; Gift of Cornelia Hahn Oberlander. AP075.S1.D001, Playground for Children's Creative Centre, Canadian Federal Pavilion, Expo '67, 1965-1967

Figure 29.
View of Expo 67 visitors lining the railing above the playground, Children's Creative Centre, Expo 67.
Photographer unknown? 1967. Photograph.

Source: Unknown. Shared by Gabriel Jacob in the public "Expo 67" Facebook group.

Figure 30.
Music classroom with playground activity in background, Children's Creative Centre, Expo 67. Photographer unknown. 1967. Photograph.

Source: Cornelia Hahn Oberlander fonds, Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montréal; Gift of Cornelia Hahn Oberlander. AP075.S1.D001, Playground for Children's Creative Centre, Canadian Federal Pavilion, Expo '67, 1965-1967.

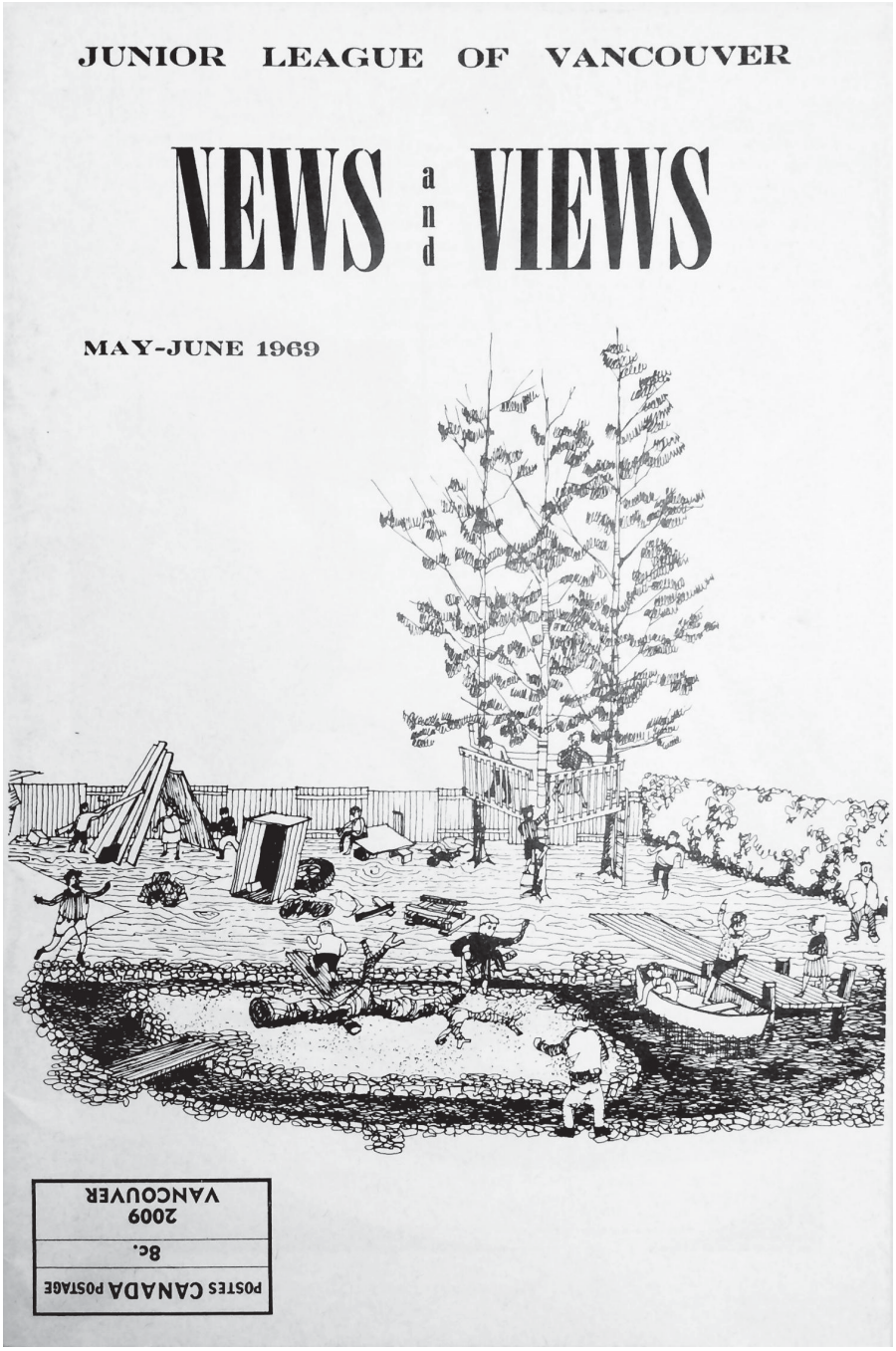


Figure 31.
Cover of Junior League of Vancouver: News and Views, with illustration of one of Hahn Oberlander's playgrounds after Expo 67.
Illustrator unknown? 1969. Cover illustration.

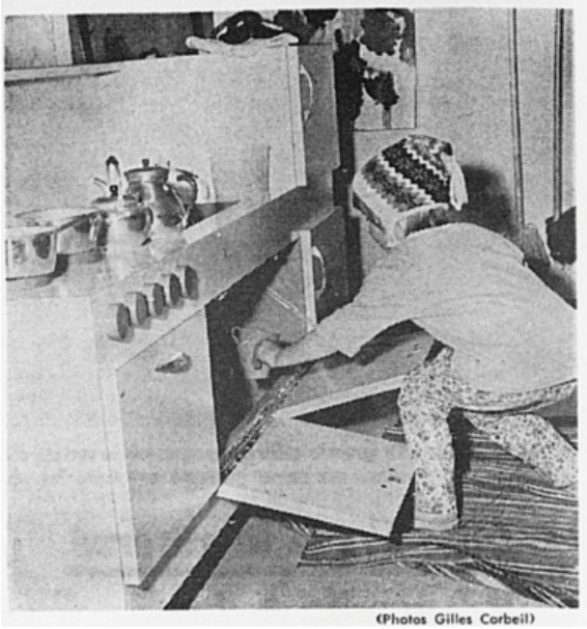
Source: Cornelia Hahn Oberlander fonds, Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montréal; Gift of Cornelia Hahn Oberlander. AP075.S1.D001, Playground for Children's Creative Centre, Canadian Federal Pavilion, Expo '67, 1965-1967.

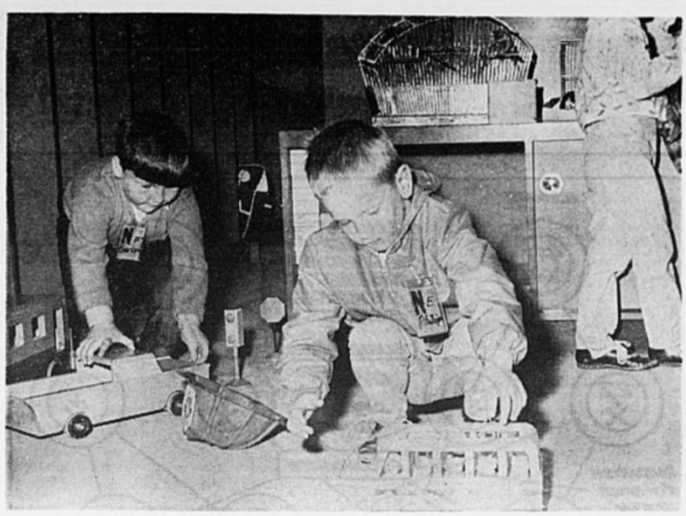
Figure 32.
Boy playing with the Pan-a-bode interlocking building logs, Children's Creative Centre, Expo 67. Marc Beaudet. 1967. Screenshot still of film.

Source: Marc Beaudet, *The Canadian Pavilion, Expo 67*. National Film Board of Canada, 1967. https://www.nfb.ca/film/the_canadian_pavilion_expo_67/.

Figure 33.
The treehouse as seen from above, Children's Creative Centre, Expo 67.
Marc Beaudet. 1967. Screenshot still of film.

Source: Marc Beaudet, *The Canadian Pavilion, Expo 67*. National Film Board of Canada, 1967. https://www.nfb.ca/film/the_canadian_pavilion_expo_67/.





Figures 34-36.
Top left; *Girl playing with the play-kitchen in the nursery, Children's Creative Centre, Expo 67.* Gilles Corbeil. 1967. Photograph.

Top right; *Girl playing with dolls in the nursery, Children's Creative Centre, Expo 67.* Gilles Corbeil. 1967. Photograph.

Bottom; *Boys playing with toy vehicles in the nursery, Children's Creative Centre, Expo 67.* Gilles Corbeil. 1967. Photograph.

Source : Claire Harting, "Distrayant pour l'esprit, formateur pour le corps: Parents, laissez vos enfants une couple d'heures au Centre d'activité créatrice," *Photo-Journal* (7-14 June 1967).

Figure 37.
Nursery staff member (seated) supervises children playing in the nursery play area, Children's Creative Centre, Expo 67.
H.D. Bancroft. 1967. Photograph.

Source: Cornelia Hahn Oberlander Fonds, Canadian Centre for Architecture Collection, Montréal. Gift of Cornelia Hahn Oberlander.

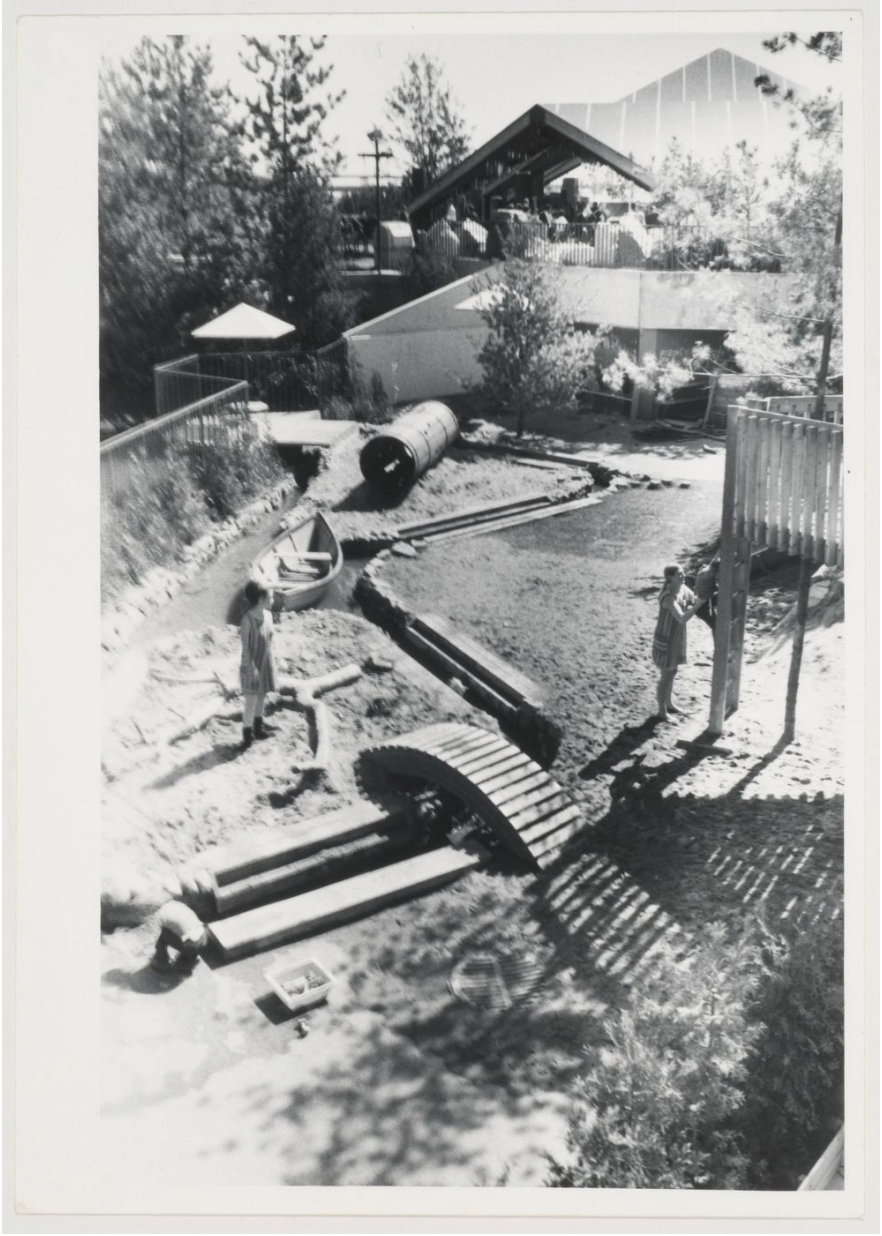


Figure 38.
Two playground supervisors at work in the playground, seen from above, Children's Creative Centre, Expo 67.
Photographer unknown. 1967. Photograph.

Source: AP075.S1.D001.P070.004, Folder 75-031-01 T, Cornelia Hahn Oberlander Fonds, Canadian Centre for Architecture Collection, Montréal. Gift of Cornelia Hahn Oberlander.

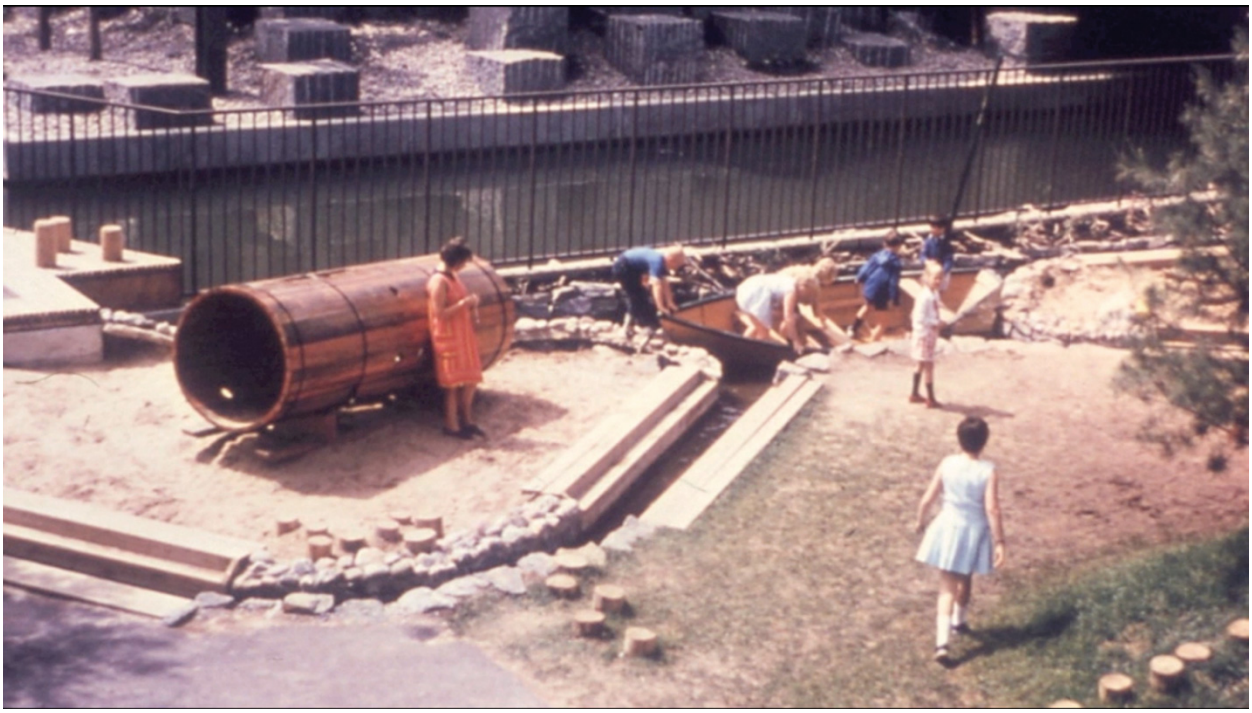


Figure 39.
Playground supervisor and children around the canal and dory in the playground, Children's Creative Centre, Expo 67.
Photographer unknown. 1967. Photograph.

Source: Courtesy of Cornelia Hahn Oberlander.

Figure 40.
Male adventure playground leader in the U.K. overseeing two boys playing.
Henry Grant. Date unknown. Photograph.

Caption: "The leader – interested, helpful but not interfering."

Source: Marjory Allen (Lady Allen of Hurtwood), *Planning for Play* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1968).

Figure 41.
Children playing with the smaller building logs, Children's Creative Centre, Expo 67.
Photographer unknown. 1967. Photograph.

Source: Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation Library.

Figure 42.
Two boys playing in the Pan-Abode log structure, Children's Creative Centre, Expo 67.
H.D. Bancroft. 1967. Photograph.

Source: AP075.S1.D001.P070.002, Folder 75-031-01 T, Cornelia Hahn Oberlander Fonds, Canadian Centre for Architecture Collection, Montréal. Gift of Cornelia Hahn Oberlander.

Figure 43.
Children playing in the building area, Children's Creative Centre, Expo 67.
Photographer unknown. 1967. Photograph.

Source: Cornelia Hahn Oberlander Fonds, Canadian Centre for Architecture Collection, Montréal. Gift of Cornelia Hahn Oberlander.

Figure 44.
Children building a cabin with the Pan-Abode logs.
Photographer unknown. 1967. Photograph.

Source: Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation Library.

Figure 45.
Girl climbing the rope ladder on the treehouse, Children's Creative Centre, Expo 67.
Photographer unknown. 1967. Photograph.

Source: Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation Library.

Figure 46.
Children playing on the treehouse, Children's Creative Centre, Expo 67
Photographer unknown. 1967. Photograph.

Source: Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation Library.

Figure 47.
Children playing in the playground, Children's Creative Centre, Expo 67.
Bill Cotter. 1967. Photograph.

Source: Courtesy of Bill Cotter.

Figure 48.
Three children in the canal and dory area, Children's Creative Centre, Expo 67.
Photographer unknown. 1967. Photograph.

Source: Susan Herrington, *Cornelia Hahn Oberlander: Making the Modern Landscape* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2013).

Figure 49.
View of the nursery play area.
Marc Beaudet. 1967. Screenshot still of film.

Source: Marc Beaudet, *The Canadian Pavilion, Expo 67*. National Film Board of Canada, 1967. https://www.nfb.ca/film/the_canadian_pavilion_expo_67/.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

ARCHIVES

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation Library. Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.

Canadian Government Participation in Expo 67, RG 20-C-2-e. Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.

Cornelia Hahn Oberlander Fonds. Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montreal, Quebec, Canada.

INTERVIEWS

Asselin, Hedwige. Interview with the author. November 23rd, 2016.

Burt, Virginia. Email exchange with the author. January 3rd, 2017.

Hahn Oberlander, Cornelia. Interview with Charles Birnbaum at her home, office, and at residential and civic projects in Vancouver, British Columbia. August 3-5, 2008. The Cultural Lansdcape Foundation.

Hill, Sandy. Interview with the author. December 15th, 2016.

PRIMARY TEXTS

Allen, Marjorie (Lady Allen of Hurtwood). *Planning for Play.* Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1968.

Carter, Joe and Pieter Sijpkes. *Adventure Playgrounds / Green Thumbs, Sore Thumbs*. Project Report. Pointe-Saint-Charles, Montreal, 1972. http://www.arch.mcgill.ca/prof/sijpkes/adventure_playgrounds.pdf.

Chilvers, Marilyn. "NSNH Creative Playground," Junior League of Vancouver: News and Views (May-June 1969).

De Ruyter, Dini. "'The Problem of Play.'" *The Columbian*, 3 May 1969.

Expo 67. In *Facebook* [Public group]. 2017. https://www.facebook.com/groups/2315922460/.

Goodman, Joyce. "Canadian Pavilion Promises Model for Future Parks – 'A Revolt Against Asphalt." *The Montreal Star*, 9 January 1967.

Harting, Claire. “Distrayant pour l’esprit, formateur pour le corps: Parents, laissez vos enfants une couple d’heures au Centre d’activité créatrice.” *Photo-Journal*, 7-14 June 1967.

Hahn Oberlander, Cornelia. “Playgrounds... A Plea for Utopia or the Re-Cycled Empty Lot,” 1974.

---. “Space for Creative Play.” *The Canadian Landscape Architect* (1966): 16-17.

Hill, Polly. “Children’s Creative Centre at Canada’s Expo 67.” *Young Children* 22, no. 5 (1967): 258–63.

---. *Children’s Creative Centre: Methods and Objectives*. Ottawa: Queen’s Printer, 1967.

---. “Report to the Commissioner General of the Canadian Pavilion, Mr. H.L. Brown: Children’s Creative Centre Operation (six months during Expo ’67).” 1967. File 1: Playground for Children's Creative Centre, Canadian Federal Pavilion, Expo ’67. 1965-1967. AP075.S1.D001. Cornelia Hahn Oberlander Fonds, Canadian Centre for Architecture Collection, Montreal.

Lamont, Austin F. “Films at Expo – A Retrospect.” *Journal of the University Film Association* 21.1 (1969): 3-12.

Law, Harriet. “Freedom and Cooperation at Expo Creative Centre.” *Monday Morning*, 1967.

“Odds and Ends,” The Canadian Architect 11.3 (1966): 5-6.

Shatnoff, Judith. “Expo 67: A Multiple Vision.” *Film Quarterly* 21.1 (1967): 2-13.

“Children to be Creative at Expo.” *Montreal Gazette*, 2 November 1965.

“À l’Expo, l’art et l’enfant.” *Montréal Matin*, 2 November 1965.

“A place for the lost and the cranky: Expo plans a garden to keep small children and parents happy.” *The Globe and Mail*, 13 December 1966, 11.

BOOKS

Adams, Annmarie, and Petra Tancred. *Designing Women: Gender and the Architectural Profession.* Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000.

Ahmed, Sara. *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2006.

Anderson, Benefict R. O'G. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso, 2006.

Barthes, Roland. *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, trans. Richard Howard. New York: Hill and Wang, 2010.

Burkhalter, Gabriela, ed. *The Playground Project*. Exhibition catalogue. Kunsthalle Zurich. Zurich: JRP Ringier, 2016.

Castañeda, Claudia. *Figurations: Child, Bodies, Worlds*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2002.

Duempelmann, Sonja, and John Beardsley. *Women, Modernity, and Landscape Architecture*. London ; New York: Routledge, 2015.

Edelman, Lee. *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2004.

Herrington, Susan. *Cornelia Hahn Oberlander: Making the Modern Landscape*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2014.

Holland, Patricia. *Picturing Childhood: The Myth of the Child in Popular Imagery*. New York: I.B. Tauris, 2004.

Kozlovsky, Roy. *The Architectures of Childhood: Children, Modern Architecture and Reconstruction in Postwar England*. London and New York: Routledge, 2016.

Ledermann, Alfred and Alfred Trachsel. *Creative Playgrounds and Recreation Centers*. New York and Washington: Frederick A. Praeger, 1968.

Lynch, Kevin. *The Image of the City*. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1960.

Massey, Doreen. *For Space*. London: SAGE, 2005.

Miedema, Gary. *For Canada's Sake: Public Religion, Centennial Celebrations, and the Re-making of Canada in the 1960s.* Montreal; Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2005.

Ogata, Amy F. *Designing the Creative Child: Playthings and Places in Midcentury America*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013.

Richman Kenneally, Rhona and Johanne Sloan, eds. *Expo 67: Not Just a Souvenir*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010.

Strauven, Francis. *Aldo Van Eyck: The Shape of Relativity*. Amsterdam: Architectura & Natura. 1998.

Tonkiss, Fran. *Space, the City, and Social Theory*. Cambridge, UK; Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2005.

Van Slyck, Abigail Ayres. *A Manufactured Wilderness: Summer Camps and the Shaping of American Youth, 1890-1960*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006.

Way, Thaisa. *Unbounded Practice: Women and Landscape Architecture in the Early Twentieth Century*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2009.

ARTICLES & CHAPTERS

Adams, Annmarie. "Learning from Expo: A New Generation of Architecture Students Explore The Legacy of Montreal's Expo 67, Rediscovering Its Significance in Today's World." *Canadian Architect* (2007): 40–42.

---. "The Power of Pink: Children's Bedrooms and Gender Identity." *ZEITSCHRIFT FUR GESCHLECHTERFORSCHUNG UND VISUELLE KULTUR* 50 (2010): 59–69.

Adams, Annmarie, David Theodore, Ellie Goldenberg, Coralee McLaren, and Patricia McKeever. "Kids in the Atrium: Comparing Architectural Intentions and Children's Experiences in a Pediatric Hospital Lobby." *Social Science and Medicine* 70, no. 5 (2010): 658–67. doi:10.1016/j.socscimed.2009.10.049.

Ahmed, Sara. "Orientations: Toward a Queer Phenomenology." *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 12.4 (2006): 543-574.

Ahrentzen, Sherry. "The Space between the Studs: Feminism and Architecture." *Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 29, no. 1 (2003): 176–206.

Bond Stockton, Kathryn. "Growing Sideways, or Why Children Appear to Get Queerer in the Twentieth Century." In *The Queer Child, or Growing Sideways in the Twentieth Century*, 1-57. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2009.

Brück, Joanna. "Landscapes of Desire: Parks, Colonialism, and Identity in Victorian and Edwardian Ireland." *International Journal of Historical Archaeology* 17, no. 1 (2013): 196–223.

Curtis, Barry. "That Place Where: Some Thoughts on Memory and the City." In *The Unknown City: Contesting Architecture and Social Space : A Strangely Familiar Project*, 54-67. Cambridge, MA: MIT, 2001.

de Certeau, Michel. "General Introduction." In *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Rendall, xi-xxiv. Los Angeles; London: University of California Press, 1984.

Foucault, Michel. "Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias," *Architecture/Mouvement/Continuité*, trans. Jay Miskowiec (October 1984): 1-9.

Gagen, Elizabeth A. "An Example to Us All: Child Development and Identity Construction in Early 20th-Century Playgrounds." *Environment and Planning A* 32, no. 4 (2000): 599–616. doi:10.1068/a3237.

Gagnon, Monika and Janine Marchessault. "Introduction." In *Reimagining Cinema: Film at Expo 67*, 3-15. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2014.

Gillis, John R. "The Islanding of Children — Reshaping the Mythical Landscapes of Childhood Title." In *Designing Modern Childhoods: History, Space, and the Material Culture of Children*, edited by Maria Gutman and Ning de Coninck-Smith, 316–31. New Brunswick, New Jersey and London: Rutgers University Press, 2008.

Godfrey, Stephen. "In Person: A Growing Concern." *The Globe and Mail*. 2 July 1988): http://0-search.proquest.com.mercury.concordia.ca/docview/385857119?accountid=10246.

Griffith, Jane. "One Little, Two Little, Three Canadians: The Indians of Canada Pavilion and Public Pedagogy, Expo 1967." *Journal of Canadian Studies* 49, no. 2 (2015): 171–204.

Hall, Adrienne. "A Brief History of the Urban Playground." *Ground*, no. 22 (2013): 12–15.

Hammond, Cynthia I. "THE (HUMAN) HABITAT : HUMANISM , ARCHITECTURE AND HABITAT 67 / 04," n.d., 227–36.

---. "The Thin End of the Green Wedge: Berlin's Planned and Unplanned Urban Landscapes." In *Urban Forests, Trees, and Greenspace : A Political Ecology Perspective*, edited by L. Anders Sandberg, Adrina Bardekjian, and Sadia Butt, 207–24. New York: Routledge, 2013.

Herrington, Susan. "Cornelia Hahn Oberlander: A Model Modern." In *Women, Modernity, and Landscape Architecture*, eds. Sonja Duempelmann and John Beardsley, 185-202. London ; New York: Routledge, 2015.

---. "Playgrounds as Community Landscapes." *Built Environment* 25, no. 1 (1998): 25–34.

Holloway, Sarah L. "Children's Geographies Changing Children's Geographies," 2014.

Ingraham, Catherine. "Architecture, Lament and Power." In *Journal of Philosophy and the Visual Arts: Architecture, Space, Painting*, ed. by Andrew Benjamin, 10-14. London, New York:

The Academy Group/St. Martin's Press, 1992.

Jones, Owain. "Tomboy Tales: The Rural, Nature and the Gender of Childhood." *Gender, Place & Culture* 6, no. 2 (1999): 117–36.

Kanes Weisman, Leslie. "A Feminist Experiment: Learning from WSPA, Then and Now." In *Architecture: A Place for Women*, edited by Ellen Perry Berkeley, 125–33. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1989.

Karsten, L. "Children's Use of Public Space: The Gendered World of the Playground." *Childhood* 10, no. 4 (2003): 457–73.

Katz, Cindi. "Cultural Geographies Lecture: Childhood as Spectacle: Relays of Anxiety and the Reconfiguration of the Child." *Cultural Geographies* 15, no. 1 (2008): 5–17.

Kozlovsky, Roy. "Adventure Playgrounds and Postwar Reconstruction." In *Designing Modern Childhoods: History, Space, and the Material Culture of Children*, ed. Marta Gutman and Ning de Coninck-Smith, 171-192. New Brunswick, New Jersey and London: Rutgers University Press, 2008. Print.

Lerner, Fern. "Foundations for Design Education: Continuing the Bauhaus Vorkurs Vision." *Studies in Art Education* 46.3 (2005): 211-226.

Lloyd, Bonnie. "Woman's Place, Man's Place." *Landscape* 20 (1975): 10-13.

Luken, Eleanor, Victoria Carr, and Rhonda Douglas Brown. "Playscapes: Designs for Play, Exploration and Science Inquiry." *Children, Youth and Environments* 21, no. 2 (2011): 325–37.

Massey, Doreen. "Flexible Sexism." *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 9 (1991): 31–57.

McDermon, Daniel. "The Secret Art Language of New York Playgrounds." *The New York Times*, March 15, 2017. https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/15/arts/design/julia-jacquette-playground-art.html?_r=1.

McPherson, Hugo. "Sculpture in Canada." In *Architecture and Sculpture in Canada: Canadian Government Pavilion, Expo 67*, 3-10. Ottawa: Roger Duhamel, 1967.

O'Neill, Maire Eithne. "Corporeal Experience : A Haptic Way of Knowing." *Journal of Architectural Education* 55, no. 1 (2001): 3–12.

Paechter, Carrie and Sheryl Clark. "Learning Gender in Primary School Playgrounds: Findings from the Tomboy Identities Study." *Culture & Society* 15.3(2007): 330.

Pearlman, Jill E. "The Battle over Basic Design." In *Inventing American Modernism: Joseph Hudnut, Walter Gropius, and the Bauhaus legacy at Harvard*, 200-238. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2007.

Spencer-Wood, Suzanne M. "Turn of the Century Women's Organizations, Urban Design, and the Origin of the American Playground Movement." *Landscape Journal* 13, no. 2 (1994): 124–37.

Steiner, Henriette, and Kristin Veel. "Article Living Behind Glass Facades : Surveillance Culture and New Architecture." *Surveillance & Society* 9, no. 1/2 (2011): 215–32.

Theall, Donald. "Expo 67 as Total Environment." In *Reimagining Cinema: Film at Expo 67*, 16-24. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2014.

Valentine, Gill. "Angels and Devils: Moral Landscapes of Childhood." *Environment and Planning. D. Society & Space* 14, no. 5 (January 1996): 581–99.

---. " 'Oh Yes I Can.'Oh No You Can't': Children and Parents' Understandings of Kids' Competence to Negotiate Public Space Safely." *Antipode* 29, no. 1 (January 1, 1997): 65–89. doi:10.1111/1467-8330.00035.

Wallace, Aurora. "Girl Watching at Expo 67." *In Expo 67: Not Just a Souvenir*, eds. Rhona Richman Kenneally and Johanne Sloan, 109-124. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010.

Zeiher, Helga. "Children's Islands in Space and Time: The Impact of Spatial Differentiation on Children's Ways of Shaping Social Life." In *Childhood in Europe: Approaches, Trends, Findings*, edited by Manuela DuBois-Reymond, Heinz Sünker, and Heinz-Hermann Krüger, 139–60. New York: Peter Lang, 2001.

THESES & DISSERTATIONS

Cropas, Youki. "(Re)Imagining Children's Landscapes: The Social Architecture of Cornelia Hahn Oberlander." McGill, 2016.

Eilers, Frederika. "Man in His World, Children in Theirs : Material Culture at Expo ' 67." McGill University, 2010.

Mosquin, Alexandra Marie. "Advertising Canada Abroad: Canada on Display at International Exhibitions, 1920-1940." PhD Diss, Department of History, York University, July 2003.

Rogers, Randal Arthur. "Man and His World: An Indian, a Secretary and a Queer Child. Expo 67 and the Nation in Canada." *ProQuest Dissertations and Theses*. Concordia University (Canada), 1999.

Schmidt, Sarah. "Domesticating Parks and Mastering Playgrounds: Sexuality, Power and Place in Montreal, 1870-1930." Master's Thesis. McGill University, August 1996.