

Department of Sociology

Building Museums, Building Citizens

How Museum Architecture Shapes Civic Identity and Public Life



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Museums are instruments of nation building. In collecting, curating, and displaying material culture, museums both reflect and promote certain notions of citizenship and collective identity. Less well understood, however, is the role that museum architecture plays in this process. Adopting insights from architectural theory, I explore the relationship between museum architecture, civic identity, and public life, in a study of two century-old museums in Toronto. In particular, I examine how the architecture of these museums has reflected, promoted, and challenged dominant notions of citizenship throughout 100 years of Canadian history. In doing so, this presentation sheds light on the role that architecture plays in structuring collective meanings and experiences.

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Sociology Department, Room SS921
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