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## **INTEGRATED ART IN THE NEW CANADIAN EMBASSY IN BERLIN**

*In April 2005, Canada will officially open a new building designed to house Canada's Embassy in Berlin, Germany. Located in the heart of the city, the Embassy has been designed and built to reflect Germany's importance to Canada as a G8 partner and a central player in the European Union.*

One of the most talked-about features of Canada's new Embassy in Berlin is the "integrated art," or works of art that are a permanent part of the building's structure and design. Five Canadian works of art are installed in the public areas of the Berlin Embassy, where they will be seen by thousands of people each year who will travel through the Embassy's public passageway, accessing the Embassy's services, or visiting the Embassy on official business.

Serving functional as well as aesthetic purposes, these works are based on the theme of the Canadian landscape, and are created from natural or Canadian-built products.

This represents the first time that a public call for proposals from artists has been held to commission integrated art into the architecture of a Canadian Embassy. Five artists were chosen from among 227 across Canada who submitted expressions of interest in response to the call. The five, all of whom have demonstrated success in public art, were selected in 2002 by an advisory committee comprising visual arts, architectural, design and project specialists. The final works were commissioned by Canada's Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade.

The artists worked closely with building architects and project managers to ensure effective progress from vision to installation. Following are brief descriptions of the art and the artists who created them.

### **"RIVER – RIVIÈRE – FLUSS," BARBARA STEINMAN**

Granite and quartzite inlaid floor design for main Embassy reception area

Designed for the floor of the Reception Hall in the new Embassy, the shape of a river is inlaid with laser-cut white and blue-gray granites in a field of polished black. Stainless steel strips delineate latitude and longitude. The inlay looks like an ice floe or a bathymetric map of water depths. The work suggests an overlay of sites: Canada within the city of Berlin, each known for its many waterways and rivers.

*Barbara Steinman lives and works in her hometown of Montreal, Quebec. She was a recipient of a Governor General's Award in Visual and Media Arts in 2002.*

**“CANADIAN WEATHER PATTERNS,” BARBARA ASTMAN**

Fritted pattern on curved glass wall around the Timber Hall

Barbara Astman has used a translucent white frit to create impressions of cloud patterns, based on satellite pictures of Earth where the continents are partially obscured by clouds in the lower atmosphere. This glass wall, with its abstract images and indistinct geographic features, surrounds the staircase of the Embassy’s Timber Hall and overlooks a water garden and waterfall.

*Barbara Astman is on the faculty of the Ontario College of Art and Design in Toronto, Ontario. She has been involved in public art projects since the mid-1980s and has exhibited in Canada and internationally for more than 30 years.*

**“THE RIVER AS THREAD, THE CANOE AS NEEDLE,” JOHN McEWEN**

Bronze sculpture in the Canada Passage

Each day, several hundred people will see this 6.4-metre bronze canoe suspended overhead as they pass through the public passage between Leipziger Platz and the interior courtyard. Created by Canadian sculptor John McEwen, the canoe is engraved with a map of Canada’s major waterways. The map illustrates the routes taken by Alexander Mackenzie from Montreal to the Beaufort Sea in 1789, and to the Pacific Ocean in 1793, thus the concept of “the river as thread, the canoe as needle.”

*John McEwen is one of Canada's leading artists and is represented in museum, gallery and private collections across the country, notably the McMichael Canadian Art Collection in Kleinburg, Ontario.*

**“NORTH,” ADRIAN GÖLLNER**

Wood and aluminum floor design and suspended aluminum and glass compass rim in the Timber Hall

Adrian Göllner’s floor design for the public-use conference room in the Timber Hall was inspired by the concept of “North” as a commonality between the two nations and a reorientation from the former East-West division to “North.” “North” comprises two parts: the first a metal and glass compass ring that floats just below the top of the Timber Hall and changes colour throughout the day depending upon the light, going from blue to magenta to golden bronze by dusk; the second an inlaid floor design depicting stars in the north sky, including the Pole Star. The arrangement of stars depicts an astronomical method for finding north.

*Adrian Göllner is a contemporary artist who lives and works in Ottawa, Ontario. He employs a variety of media and techniques in a chameleon-like adaptation to the environments in which he exhibits.*

**“CANOPY,” ROBIN COLLYER**

Digital photographic image on vinyl applied to architectural louvres in the Embassy courtyard

The artist has applied a photographic image of a Northern Ontario woodland scene to the underside of a series of 14-metre long louvres. The effect is an autumn-coloured tree canopy within the central courtyard of the Embassy. This work subtly inserts a Canadian landscape scene into the urban architectural environment of contemporary Berlin.

*Robin Collyer lives and works in Toronto, Ontario. He is known internationally for his sculptural practice and also works extensively with photography.*

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