

REIMAGINING CINEMA
Film at Expo 67

Edited by M

VILLE DE MONTREAL

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Janine Marchessault

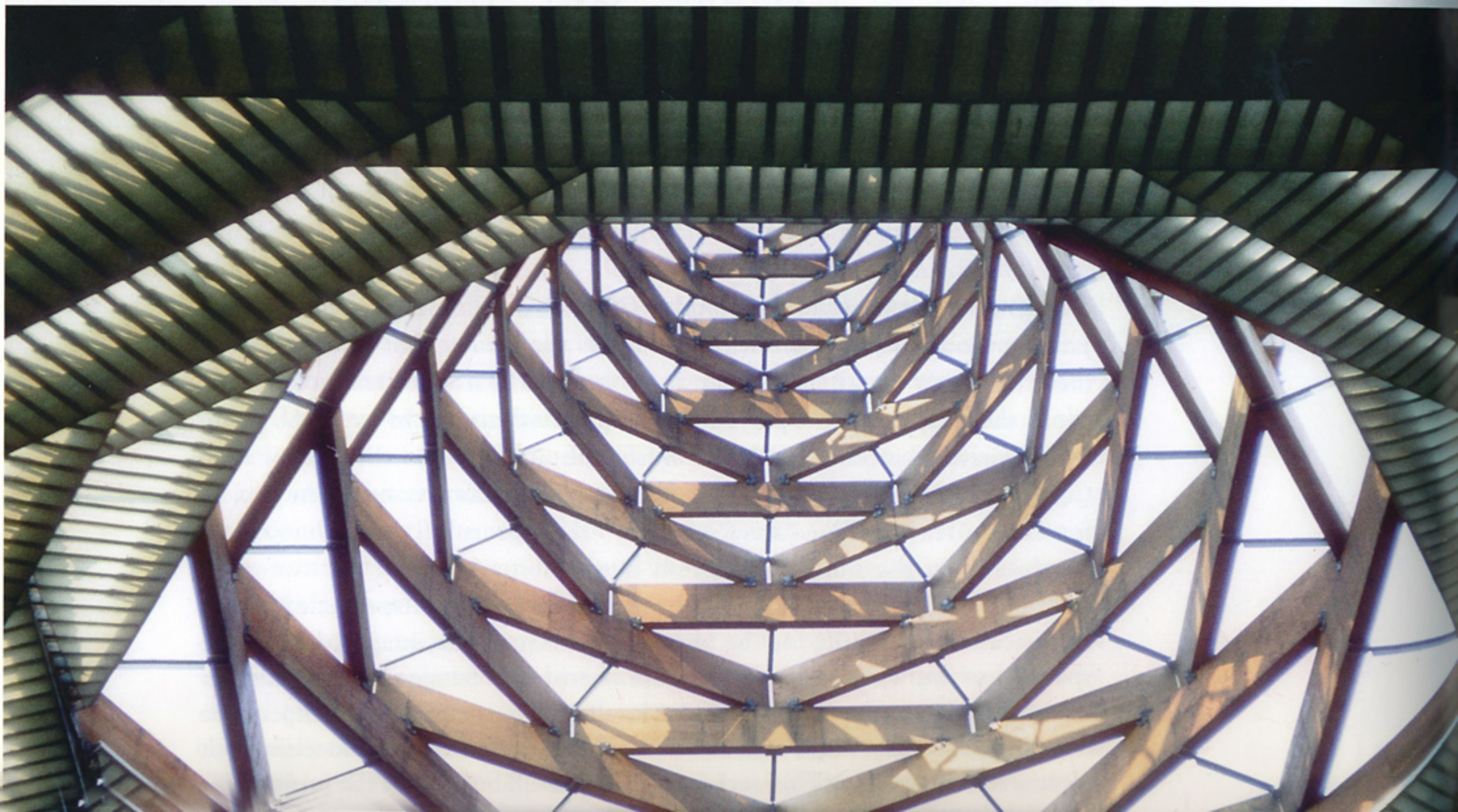
4.1 Exterior view of Man in the Community Pavilion.





4.3 Man in the Community Pavilion; Arthur Erickson and Geoffrey Massey, architects.

4.4 Wooden spiral roof of Man in the Community Pavilion; Arthur Erickson and Geoffrey Massey, architects.





4.5 Peaceful interior designed for Man in the Community Pavilion, a reprieve from the cacophony of city life.

there was a desire to communicate with an international audience. The film would play ten hours a day, seven days a week, for six months.²⁸

The pavilion building, located in the Cité du Havre, was designed by architects Arthur Erickson and Geoffrey Massey from Vancouver, who created a serene outer and inner space intended to counteract the cacophony of the city. The hexagonal structure, built of Pacific fir and spruce, was 134 feet high with a diameter of 285 feet at its base. The physical building looked like a pyramid or spiral made of wood logs covered by translucent vinyl sheets and culminated in a cone-shaped roof open to the sky. Visitors passing underneath were able to catch the play of light and shadow and a utopian, spiral-shaped vista 100 feet overhead.

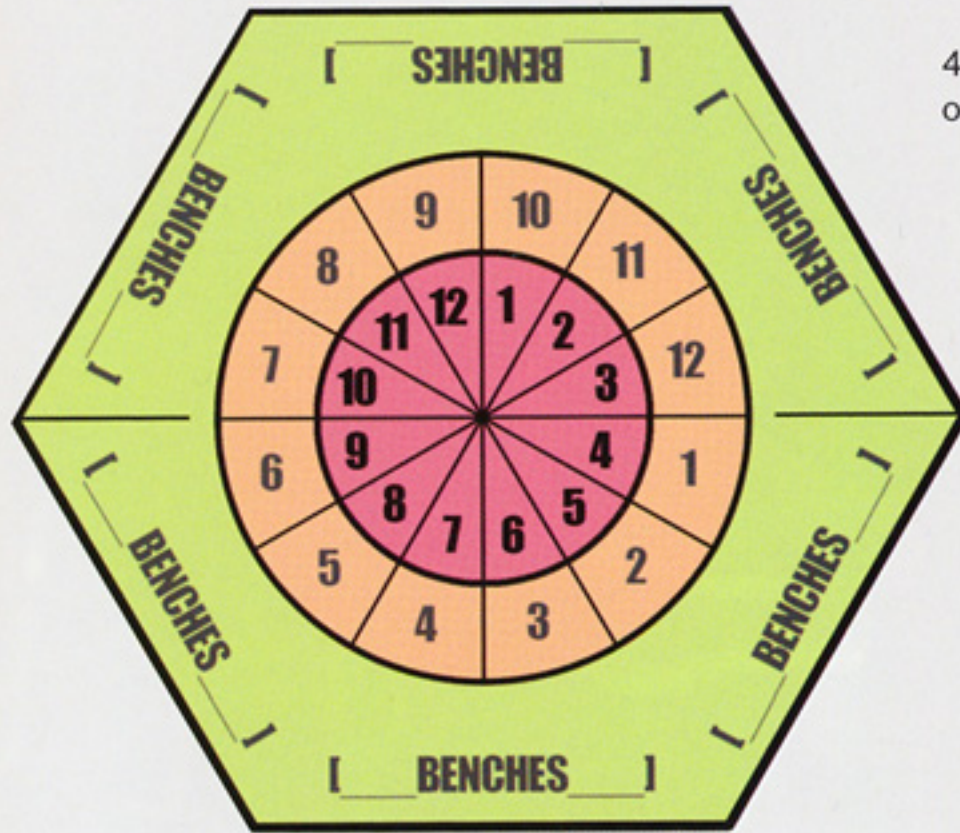
universal theme of the city and technology as seen in terms of “youth, scientific research, consumerism, love, communication, violence, authority.”³²

Pop Art worked with the Op Art aesthetic of illusion in *Citérama*. Op Art derives from the Constructivist experiments of the Bauhaus, which stressed gestalt experiments, perception, and physical theatrical engagement as inherent aspects of the design process.³³ The combination of Pop and Op Art was popularized with Andy Warhol’s *Exploding Plastic Inevitable*, a theatrical multimedia show featuring performances by the Velvet Underground and Nico, along with Gerard Malanga and Edie Sedgwick as dancers, and Warhol’s films. The show travelled through the United States during 1966 and 1967 and was featured in the 27 May 1966 issue of *Life* magazine. Warhol’s experiments had an influence on young Quebec artists in Montreal; Jean-Paul Mousseau recalls reading about them in *Life*. He was directly inspired by Warhol when he designed media spectacles for discotheques in 1966, calling them “Mousse Spachthèques.” The first of six opened in 1966, at 1467 Crescent Street.³⁴ All this is important because Germain Perron was part of this Montreal scene when he was invited to design the stages for *Citérama*. As André Bourassa observed, the general influence of Expo 67 on Montreal’s rich theatrical scene was also unmistakable: “We are still in the ambiance of Expo 67 ... the environments of the scenographer Germain Perron for *Citérama*; the multimedia events of Zirmates (Pierre Cornellier, Serge LeMoyne, Claude Péloquin, and Jean Sauvageau); the multimedia installation by Pierre Moretti, *Équations pour un homme seul*, performed by the troupe Saltimbanques; the public installation of a sound and mobile sculpture from the group Fusion des arts by Richard Lacroix; the opening of the *Laterna Magika* from the Czech scenographer Josef Svoboda, who helped to discover the use of black light on stage.”³⁵

The young Perron’s intermedia scenes in *Citérama* combined geometric shapes with various forms of light, reflected on mirrors to engage with sensory perceptions and new kinds of cognitive awareness. The creative team of Languirand, Godbout, Carle, and Bush imagined that the “combination of those elements [would] stimulate in [the spectator] the creation of associations of ideas by which, moreover, he takes an active part in the event.” The soundtrack, a combination of jazz, concrete sound, and recorded voices, prefigured surround-sound techniques, creating an immersive environment. Highly advanced lighting “achieved with the aid of an electro-magnetic organ, capable of controlling 25 circuit and 24 changes” was also designed in conjunction with the sound to create dramatic effects.³⁶

Like the building in which it was housed, *Citérama* was conceived as a spiral – cyclical, yet open ended, and open to the world. For Languirand it was impossible to synchronize the two platforms whose rotations, it turned out, were also irregular with the soundtrack. So in the same way that each spectator

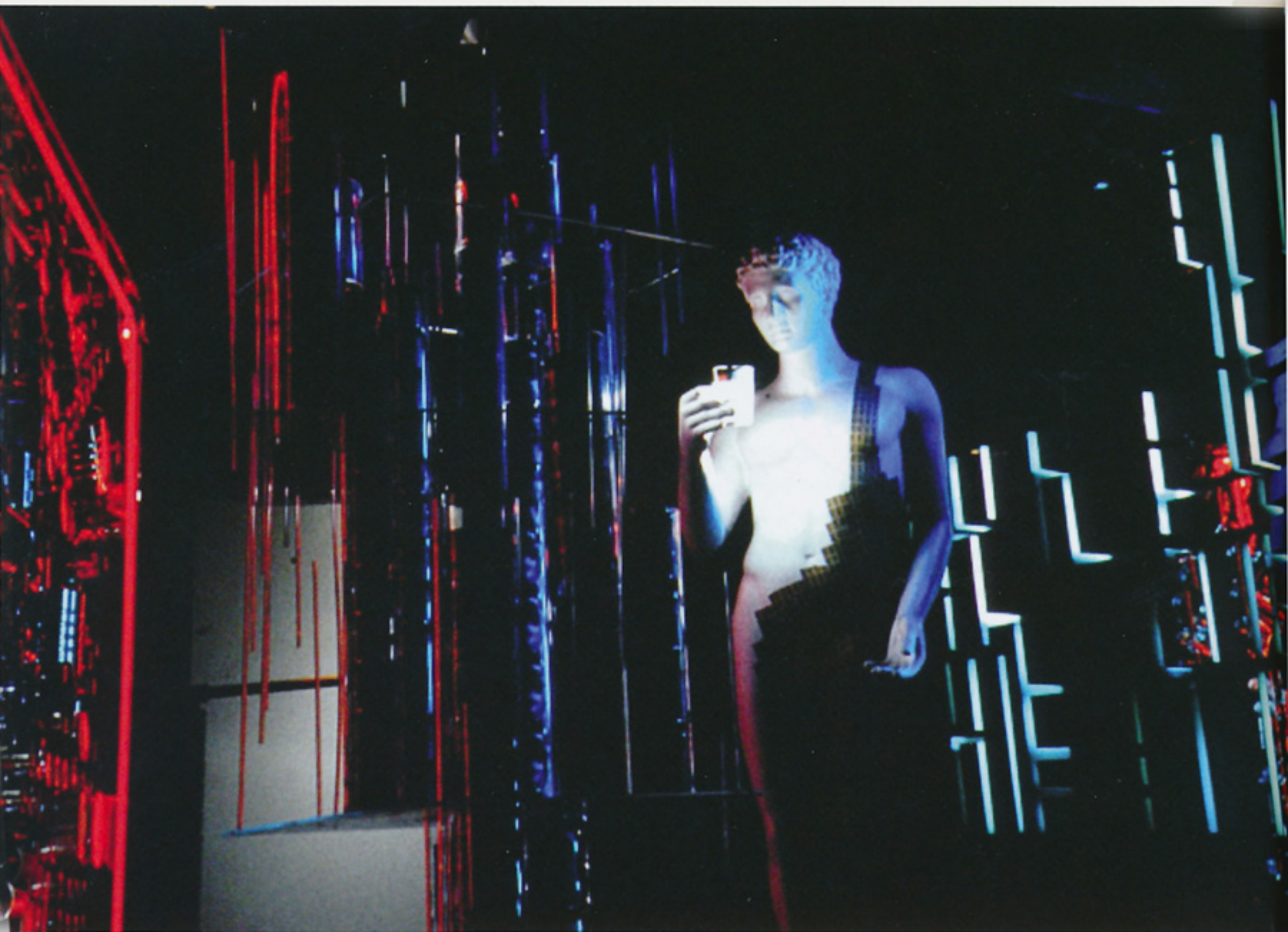
Dossier: *Citérama*



4.7 Diagram illustrating the structure of *Citérama*'s two platforms.

4.8 One of twenty-four stages of *Citérama* designed by Germain Perron. The theme of this setting is medicine and technology, illustrated by a sculptural reproduction of Venus de Milo with artificial arms.





4.9 Another of the twenty-four stages of *Citérama* designed by Germain Perron. "Consumption" is illustrated by a reproduction of a Greek statue, depicting a young man holding a tin can.

4.10 One of the many experiments with light and sculpture on the rotating platforms of *Citérama*.

FILM STUDIES, CULTURAL STUDIES

Expo 67, in its utopian aspirations, invited artists to create the world anew. What distinguished Montreal's exhibition from previous world's fairs were its dramatic displays of film and media, transformed into urban and futuristic architectures. *Reimagining Cinema* explores the innovations that film and media artists offered Expo audiences and presents extensive visual material to reconstruct the viewer's experience.

At the pinnacle of a new global humanism, cinema was expanded beyond the frame into total environments, multiscreens, and multi-image and 360-degree immersion – experiments often seen as a harbinger of the digital age. Taking this expanded cinema as a starting point, the contributors focus on eight screen experiments and employ innovative methodologies to reveal the intricacies and processes of production, while including factual descriptions, interpretive essays, interviews, and image dossiers. The book reflects how the Expo 67 film-events were developed as institutional collaborations with artists and as creative experiments that resonated with broader 1960s arts and culture.

More displays of photographic, cinematic, and telematic technology were experienced at Expo 67 than in any other previous world exposition. *Reimagining Cinema* captures the complexity and imaginative fervour of this exciting period in film history.

"*Reimagining Cinema* is a brilliant example of a work of historical reconstruction that remains theoretically focused throughout. It is not mere nostalgia, but an advance in our understanding of a key moment in Canadian and international cultural history."

RICHARD CAVELL, Department of English, University of British Columbia

MONIKA KIN GAGNON is professor of communication studies at Concordia University.

JANINE MARCHESSAULT is professor of cinema and media studies at York University.

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