

## Global Citizen: The Architecture of Moshe Safdie

National Academy Museum, New York, New York

10 September 2015 – 10 January 2016

BSA Space, Boston Society of Architects, Boston, Massachusetts

15 February 2016 – 15 May 2016

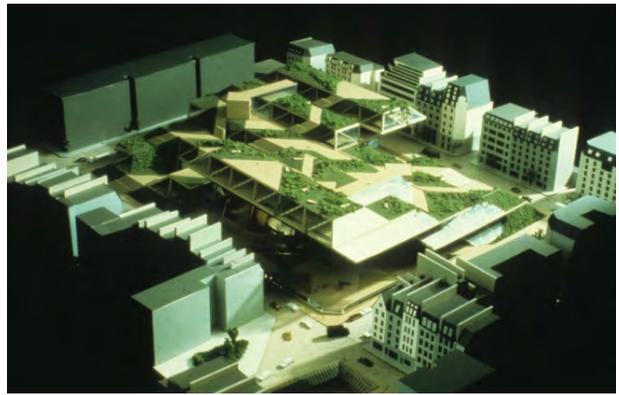
*Moshe Safdie's career has traced a remarkable trajectory in the canon of modern architecture. From his early-1960s design for Habitat—among the century's most noteworthy experiments in prefabricated housing—to his current practice within an expanding global architectural culture, Safdie's work encompasses more than eighty-five completed buildings, communities, and master plans on three continents, as well as numerous unbuilt projects and competition entries. His most significant commissions have been for the public sphere: museums, cultural centers, libraries, memorials, schools, and religious facilities. Arguing that architecture plays a major role in people's lives, Safdie has carved a distinctive niche for himself in contemporary culture. His aesthetic language of transcendent light, powerful geometric form, and metaphoric imagery produces structures that are ceremonial and uplifting yet unintimidating. He has skillfully realized the aspirations of a surprisingly diverse clientele—including New England patricians, Indian Sikhs, and the governments of Israel, Canada, and the United States—for whom he has created buildings where communities are forged of strangers, memory is enshrined and identity is shaped. Although Safdie's populist work has generated controversy, he remains an unapologetic proponent of architecture as a socially activist art.*

*Donald Albrecht, Curator*

*Global Citizen* is organized into five sections, each dedicated to pivotal points of development in Moshe Safdie's design philosophy, "progressive contextualism." Flowing from his early, formative years through his vision for the future, the exhibition illuminates Safdie's belief that a building should be an extension of its physical, historical, and cultural environments.

Total of 202 objects, including:

- 37 models with bases
- 36 encased drawings
- 114 wall mounted drawings and photographs
- 13 digital context and project monitors
- 2 projections



## PART 1 THE SHAPE OF THINGS TO COME

Habitat, Moshe Safdie's contribution to Expo '67 in Montreal, launched the first phase of his career. Safdie was a young modernist committed to pure geometric forms and to the ability of industrialized building systems to improve people's lives. His projects, animated by circulation systems such as skywalks, elevators, and stairways, resulted in what he called "three-dimensional communities." Drawing on the experimental nature and social trends of the day as well as concerns about massive population increase, Safdie designed buildings that featured repetitive grids and modules, creating structures with multiple functions and flexibility.

Undergraduate Thesis McGill University, Montreal QC (1961; unbuilt)

Habitat '67 Montreal QC (1964-67)

Habitat New York I New York NY (1967-68; unbuilt)

Habitat New York II New York NY (1967-68; unbuilt)

San Francisco State College Student Union CA (1967-68; unbuilt)

Habitat Puerto Rico San Juan (1968-70; unbuilt)

Habitat Israel, Jerusalem (1969-70; unbuilt)

Pompidou Centre, Plateau Beaubourg Competition Paris (1971; unbuilt)



## PART 2 THE FUTURE OF THE PAST

The second phase of Safdie's career coincided with his establishment of a branch office in Jerusalem in 1970. Victory in the 1967 war had returned Jerusalem's Old City to Israel, creating opportunities for major architectural projects. The dense fabric of the Old City had a profound effect on Safdie as an urban thinker. Safdie's work during this period combined his interests in social activism and advanced technologies with

profound respect for historic and regional context. Over the next six years, Safdie laid the foundation for a new aesthetic of “progressive contextualism”—a way of thinking globally about building.

Yeshiva Porat Yosef Jerusalem (1971–77)

Block 38 Housing Jerusalem (1972–77)

Western Wall Precinct Jerusalem (1972–74; unbuilt)

Mamilla Center Jerusalem (1972–2009)

Hebrew Union College Jerusalem (1976–2001)

Ben Gurion International Airport Airside Terminal Tel Aviv (1995–2004)

Yad Vashem Holocaust History Museum Jerusalem (1997–2005)



### PART 3 TRIUMPH OF AN ‘OUTCAST’

While Safdie’s career had flourished in Israel in the 1970s, it wasn’t until the early 1980s that he began receiving commissions in North America. This phase of his career was marked by culturally significant projects across the United States and Canada. His interest in geometry as a generator of architectural shape took new directions as he embraced computer technology to create new dynamic forms that served as visually commanding civic signatures. He also continued to use metaphoric imagery to move projects beyond the purely programmatic, touching, he has noted, “on the most subtle issues of character and symbol as expressed by architecture.”

National Gallery of Canada Ottawa ON (1983–88)

Exploration Place Science Center Wichita KS (1994–2000)

Peabody Essex Museum Salem MA (1996–2003)

Salt Lake City Public Library Salt Lake City UT (1999–2003)

United States Institute of Peace Headquarters Washington DC (2001–11)

Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art Bentonville AR (2005–11)



#### PART 4 NEW GLOBAL CENTERS

Entering a new phase of work at the end of the twentieth century, today Moshe Safdie has a global architectural practice, working in the world's most dynamic emerging markets, from India to China, Singapore, and Dubai. Characterized by their greater geographic range, these projects are realized in shorter time spans and are larger in scale than projects of previous phases. The mega-scaled projects in this phase are the most recent examples of Safdie's career-long commitment to fuse architecture and landscape, art and science, public and private domains.

Khalsa Heritage Centre Anandpur Sahib (1998–2011)

Marina Bay Sands Singapore (2006–11)

Palm Jumeirah Gateway Mosque Dubai (2008; unbuilt)

National Art Museum of China Beijing (2012; unbuilt)



#### PART 5 DENSE URBANISM | HABITAT OF THE FUTURE

Earlier this year, Moshe Safdie won the 2015 American Institute of Architects Gold Medal, his profession's highest honor. Acknowledging the immense size of today's cities, Safdie in his acceptance speech claimed that "humanizing megascale is the single most urgent task that awaits us in the decades to come." This gallery showcases projects that seek to address the issue of dense urbanism. The five studies labeled Habitat of the Future brings the *Global Citizen* exhibition full circle with a twenty-first-century reimagining of Habitat '67, the revolutionary housing complex that launched Safdie's career. The futurist designs on view here, created especially for the exhibition, were spurred by Safdie's rethinking of the original design

in light of global changes that have occurred since its construction. They account not only for massive population increases, but also for new construction technologies, shifting real estate economics, and social and cultural transformations. These studies led to actual projects now being developed by Safdie Architects in Sri Lanka, Singapore, and China, such as Raffles City in Chongqing, which also confront these huge challenges.

Project Jewel at Changi Singapore (2012–2018)

Raffles City Chongqing China (2011–18)

Habitat of the Future Models Study No. 1: Vertically Stacked Habitat, Study No. 2: Urban Window Habitat, Study No 4: A-Frame Membrane Habitat, Study No. 5: Stacked Membranes Habitat (2008; unbuilt)

Projects in Construction: Colombo Residential Tower, Sri Lanka (2013- 2018), Chongqing Eling Villas, China (2012-2017), Golden Dream Bay, Qinhuangdao China, (2010-2016), Bishan SkyHabitat, Singapore (2010-2015)

