

Herménégilde Chiasson, Hon. FRAIC

President's Gala / Gala du président

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Alexander Rankin, Chairman of the College of Fellows, Kiyoshi Matzuzaki, President of the Institute, Malcolm Boyd, President of the New Brunswick Association, distinguished guests, guest speakers, friends in architecture, chers amis en architecture,

I am honoured and humbled to stand before you tonight, as one of two new Honorary Fellows invested into the College at last night's elaborate ceremony; as Honorary Life Member of the Architects' Association in this host province; as New Brunswick's 29th Lieutenant Governor; as the host of Wednesday evening's opening reception at Old Government House; and, quite honestly, as a fan and admirer of your art, science and profession as a whole.

Je sais que le comité organisateur local, mené par l'ancienne présidente, Gaye Kapkin, a oeuvré beaucoup afin de former une semaine informative et enrichissante et je crois que les organisateurs de la prochaine conférence auront beaucoup à faire afin de surpasser cette année. Votre équipe mérite votre appréciation pour tout son travail.

I have worked closely with the Architect's Association of New Brunswick since being installed as the Queen's Representative nearly 5 years ago - because I AM such an admirer of what you do. If I had not become an artist, author, playwright, photographer, film-maker and academic - I think I might have done what you do.

Three years ago, I took that admiration one step further, and partnered with the New Brunswick Association, to create the Lieutenant Governor's Award for Excellence in Architecture.

I hope during your visit to Old Government House on Wednesday, you had the opportunity to view this year's nominees for this Award, which I believe brings some public notoriety to a profession which often has the misconception of not being publicly-accessible, at all. Of course, nothing could be further from the truth, since each and every one of us is affected by your work, in every building we enter.

The genius of architecture, I believe, is its balance of form and function.

Jean Nouvell, l'architecte français et gagnant du prix Pritzker cette année – peut-être le plus grand honneur de votre profession, dit que le paradigme de l'architecture moderne est la simplicité et la complexité – plus elle paraît simple, plus elle est complexe.

It is the key to making a grand design, an imposing structure welcoming, eco-friendly, technically advanced, and - hopefully - SO user-friendly, intimidation all but disappears.

Parmi cette exposition de nominations provinciales, vous avez vu des écoles, des hôpitaux, des bureaux, des églises mais aussi des clubs de golf, un centre des Premières Nations et oui, même une demeure. Tous font preuve de bon travail – non, d'excellent travail – qui est créé et construit ici au Nouveau-Brunswick.

And this summer, the nominees works will remain on display at our Vice-regal residence, and thousands of visitors will see those ideas, transformed into significant installations on our landscape.

And I could not be more proud - of the Institute, of the New Brunswick Association, and of your members - because excellence is being practiced, and pursued, and promoted here. With all due respect, it is not just found in larger, more cosmopolitan cities. We may not have big buildings - we do have big ideas.

The Toronto architect John Lyle said in 1932 that, "I am firmly convinced that we do not need to go to Greece, Rome, England, or France for our decorative forms, and that we have here in Canada in our fauna, flora, bird, animal and marine life, a wealth of possible material."

Le Nouveau-Brunswick est un merveilleux exemple de ce que Lyle voulait dire – Nos ressources, notre paysage, notre climat – tous jouent un rôle en la construction ici. Peut-être c'est notre *nature d'innovation*?

And the new book of young Fredericton architect John Leroux, called *Building New Brunswick - An Architectural History* proves it even more.

The book showcasing 250 of New Brunswick's most significant architectural wonders, dating back more than 400-years, to our first citizens, the First Nations, and highlighting every culture - and every great building - which has followed since. Innovative ideas have been part of the landscape - from the first pre-fab houses, brought over from France and erected by Samuel de Champlain on Ile-Ste-Croix in 1604; to the symmetrical French forts of the 1700's; to the Massachusetts-style houses of the 1800's with central chimneys and upper-story windows fixed to the plate"; to institutional and office buildings of the 1900's of local granite, marble and sandstone; churches and galleries that serve as monuments and great community resources.

If, as the famed American architect Louis Kahn once said, that "architecture is the reaching out for the truth", then I believe New Brunswick has been the canvas for great architects for many hundreds, if not thousands, of years.

In his book, John Leroux says, "We owe it to ourselves and to future generations to build the best New Brunswick possible." Mr. Leroux - and I - believe buildings should inspire. I mean, wouldn't it be great of the next building YOU designed inspired people to go off and do something amazing?

Isn't that what we are all here for?

That inspiration exists - here in this room - and here in this province.

True, like other jurisdictions, we have our share of bad designs - what I have called "the decorated sheds". Those shrink-wrapped in vinyl siding, and festooned with plastic butterflies and other unfortunate decisions.

Trop souvent, nous semblons favoriser la destruction plutôt que la récupération de ce qui existe déjà. Mais ça c'est la vue des politiciens. Vous avez l'habilité, la persévérance et la profession pour changer tout cela.

Today's limitations are not those of 400 years ago - not climate nor landscape. Today's limitations are cost overruns, the effects on the environment, the building just a few inches away. But, having real-world limitations forces you to be creative!

And tonight, that is what I am asking - or even challenging - you to do. To be even more creative, to be aware of the forces of the planet, which at the same time enforcing a strong personal direction.

If a an empty behemoth like a vacant power plant on the banks of the Thames in London can be transformed into one of the foremost avant-garde art galleries on the planet, known as the Tate Modern; if a shell of a Bauhaus-designed munitions factory in the heart of Beijing can be revived as a thriving artists' colony which has re-invigorated not just a whole neighbourhood, but an entire industry of culture; of a derelict series of bottling plants and warehouses can have new life as a hub for arts and design in downtown Toronto; if an elevated interstate, deserted in the centre of Boston, can be recycled into a mile-long section of parks, civic amenities and green-space; then, why can it not happen here?

Why can abandoned paper mills - once the life-blood of communities throughout New Brunswick and elsewhere - why can they not come back to life as community centres and concert halls? Why can't we see abandoned strip mines revived as amphi-theatres? Or former fishing villages or lumber camps re-born to serve the growing eco-tourism sector?

These are today's real-world challenges. In one form or another, these are the challenges - or opportunities - facing almost every jurisdiction in the country. I believe your creativity, your ability to work clients, funders, and communities, is the way to show of your personal vision.

Rather than striving for mediocrity, why not harness that creativity in a new way, with a new vision - for the ultimate re-life-ing, the ultimate re-cycling...