



MUSÉUMS **NATURE** MONTRÉAL

Biodôme  
Insectarium  
Jardin botanique  
Planétarium



**PRESS RELEASE**  
For immediate release

## **The New Rio Tinto Alcan Planetarium Architectural Competition – THE EXHIBITION**

**Montréal, February 23, 2010 – Until November 14, 2010**, Montréal's Nature Museums will be displaying the 61 designs submitted as part of the architectural competition for the new Rio Tinto Alcan Planetarium. The new exhibition, to be held at the existing Planetarium, will give visitors a chance to examine the many innovative ideas proposed by architects from all over the world.

### **Imagination at work**

The original aim of the architectural competition was to develop a variety of innovative and daring concepts for the new building. They had to meet LEED Platinum standards – the highest under the green building rating system – as well as such other criteria as preserving the site's overall architectural heritage and making the outdoor spaces contribute to the immersive museological experience.

All participants, and especially the finalists, had to work extremely hard to come up with a concept reflecting the unique, bold and essential vision of humankind at the heart of the Universe for Quebec's only public planetarium. As Charles-Mathieu Brunelle, Executive Director of Montréal's Nature Museums, explains: "All the concepts submitted were ingenious and avant-garde. The goal of this exhibition is to share our enthusiasm for the quality and creativity of the architects' ideas with the public."

Integrating a new building into an architectural ensemble as distinctive as the Olympic site was a substantial conceptual challenge, and one that the participants responded to with great enthusiasm. Visitors will be able to see the sketches and models for all the proposals. They will also be able to appreciate the inspiration underpinning the five finalists' designs: views of the sky and nature around the building; creating a map of the sky; mythological figures; and elementary matter in transformation. All in all, it is a tribute to extraordinary human potential!

### **A competition of international scope**

In keeping with Montréal's designation as a UNESCO City of Design and its character as a city of culture and knowledge, Montréal's Nature Museums launched an architectural competition of international scope for the new Planetarium in October 2008. The first phase in the competition attracted 61 preliminary concepts from architectural firms in Quebec, the United States, Europe and even China. The proposals were studied by a ten-member jury (including five architects), according to predetermined criteria.

Five finalists were announced in mid-January 2009. In the second phase, the five finalists, all from Quebec, had to form multidisciplinary teams to develop and fine tune their initial concepts. In May 2009, the city of Montréal announced the winner: Cardin Ramirez Julien, in a consortium with Ædifica, SNC Lavalin, Dupras Ledoux ingénieurs, Fauteux et Associés Architectes Paysagistes. The firm is to complete its plans and specifications by spring 2010, and the Rio Tinto Alcan Planetarium is to open in 2012. The new building will help consolidate the leadership position of Montréal's Nature Museums as Canada's largest natural science museum complex.

"This exhibit illustrates the ingenuity and originality of the participants in the architectural competition," emphasized Jacynthe Côté, Chief executive, Rio Tinto Alcan. "We hope that this exhibit will serve as a showcase for the talent and creativity of these architects and encourage people to visit the Rio Tinto Alcan Planetarium when it opens in 2012."

Montréal's Nature Museums thank their partner, Rio Tinto Alcan, for mounting this exhibition.

*Montréal's Nature Museums – the Biodôme, Insectarium, Botanical Garden and Planetarium – helping people enjoy nature to the fullest.*

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