



came across during his travels. In order to save them from imminent destruction, he bought a sixteenth-century mosque and two eighteenth-century Indo-Portuguese churches and had them dismantled and shipped to Larouche where they are being painstakingly reconstructed piece by piece. One of these Indian buildings, the façade of Manassery Church, will occupy the privileged position formally claimed by the bell-tower of the parish church, that of the village focal point. The other Indian church façade, that of Pariyaram St George's, is located behind the village school at the threshold of the park, acting as a beacon, providing a welcoming entrance to the network of pedestrian trails through the natural environment. The Muslim Mosque and Pavilion of Thirunelveli (originally a Hindu temple) is being installed on a small mountain in the village, giving a sense of promenade to the whole installation and leading to a path that provides access to a panoramic view of the village. Plans are also underway to transport and install a seventeenth-century Brahmin's (Hindu priest) dwelling, a typical Hindu house and another church of Indo-Portuguese origin that includes an abbey and a refectory.

Simard plans to exhibit Indian art and artifacts in these buildings alongside international visual and applied art, and in the Quebec buildings, Canadian with international art. In this gathering of places of worship, homes of spiritual leaders and ordinary citizens of different religions and nationalities one cannot help but reflect on how strong religious heritage informs culture and helps shape its identity.

In addition to the religious buildings, the multi-faceted project so far also includes a gas station, inn and restaurant opened by Simard. The restaurant, Chez Margot, which opened in 2003, serves regional food with a French twist to truck drivers and the glitterati alike. It has changing exhibitions of art – from modern masters to contemporary newcomers – which the staff are trained to be able to explain. It has initiated his projects of integrating art into daily life and providing employment opportunities. These elements of the project are part of the 'long vision', demonstrating Simard's awareness that if Larouche is to become a 'destination', supporting facilities are necessary to make the journey attractive and practical. The whole scheme is ultimately devised to provide a rich and varied experience for the viewer, whether resident or visitor.

In an international context, Simard's project seems to hark back to, and continue, the utopian vision of those of the past who believed