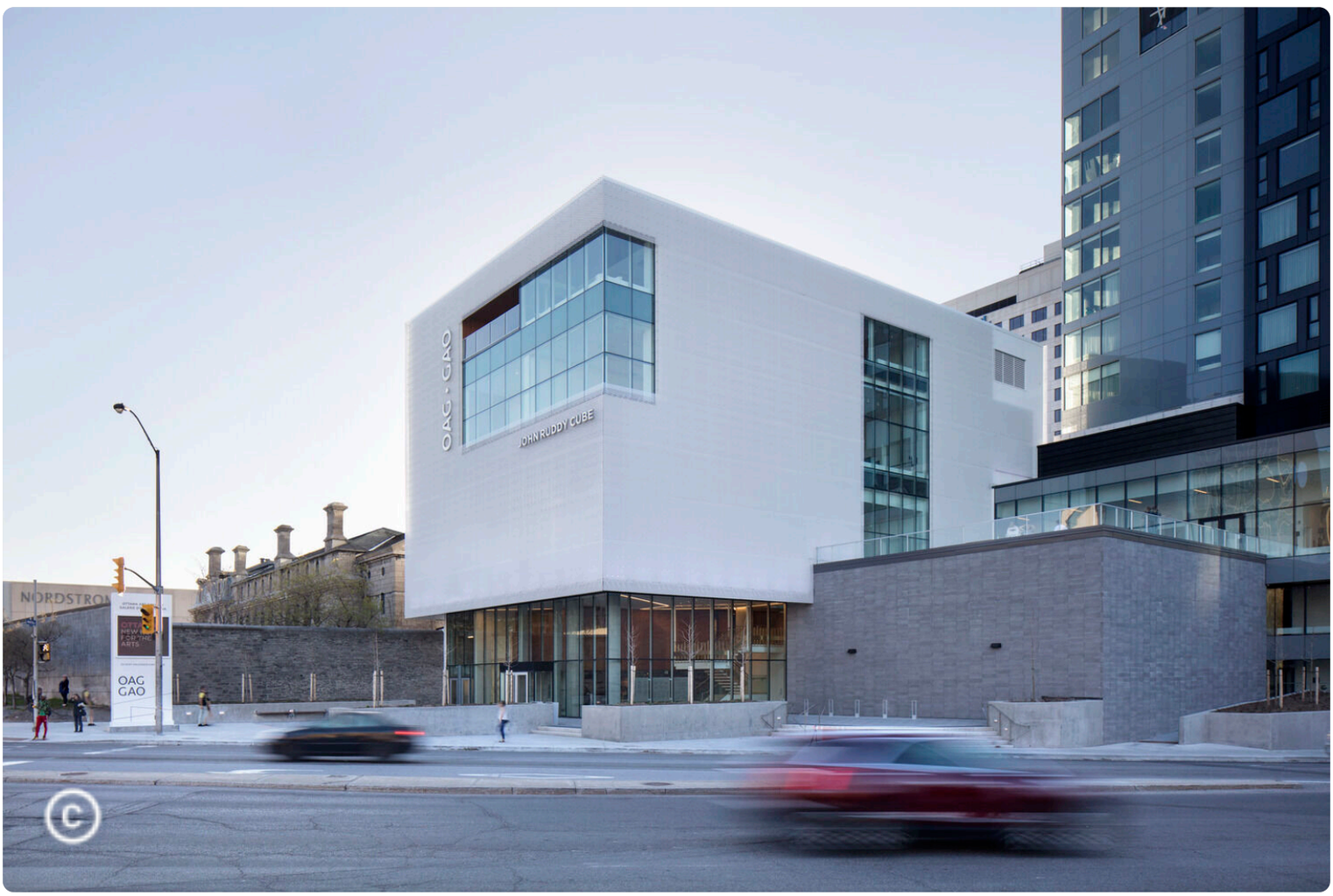
25 best architecture firms in Canada

22 May 2023 • **News** • **By Surabhi Patil**

Canadian architecture is a multifaceted reflection of its vast landscape, culture and history. From the sweeping prairies of Alberta to the rugged mountains of British Columbia, the breathtaking vistas of the Great White North are home to equally splendid designs that seamlessly blend with the landscape. As opposed to its natural beauty, the metropolises of Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal boast soaring skyscrapers and innovative contemporary structures that have made a mark on the country's-built environment. From the Gothic Revival of Parliament Hill in Ottawa to the iconic modernist designs of Toronto's CN Tower, each structure is a concoction of diverse stories and landscapes. The following list is a selection of 25 architecture firms that have left an indelible mark on Canadian fabric.



1. KPMB Architects

KPMB is an internationally recognized Canadian architecture firm founded in 1987.

The firm comprising over 150 professionals, has designed and delivered projects in an array of sectors, including education, healthcare, scientific research, arts and culture, government, corporate, hospitality, recreation and mixed-use development. KPMB is committed to shaping a more equitable and sustainable future through architecture and design. The firm is guided by its vision and anchored by its values of collaboration, innovation, and equity, diversity, and inclusion. KPMB's physical office is in downtown Toronto, one of the world’s most vibrant multicultural cities. The firm continues to work together seamlessly from its networked headquarters and home offices, serving current clients and competing for new commissions.

2. Omar Gandhi Architects

Omar Gandhi Architects (OG) is a dynamic architectural practice founded in 2010, with teams based in Halifax and Toronto. In the early years, the studio received prestigious accolades such as the Canada Council for the Arts Professional Prix de Rome and inclusion in Wallpaper* Magazine's Architects Directory. Omar Gandhi, the founder, was honoured as one of Monocle Magazine's 'Most Influential Canadians' and selected as an 'Emerging Voice' by the Architectural League of New York. The studio's commitment to design excellence was further acknowledged with the 2018 Governor General's Medal in Architecture and inclusion in Architectural Record Magazine's 2018 Design Vanguard. Notable projects include the

Rabbit Snare Gorge and the revitalization of the iconic Peggy's Cove. With a focus on contextual integration and a dedication to a thoughtful and sound architectural approach, Omar Gandhi Architects has successfully cultivated a diverse portfolio of urban, rural, and public works, as well as furniture and community designs.

3. Diamond Schmitt

Diamond Schmitt, founded in Toronto in 1975, has grown into a prominent architectural firm with offices in Vancouver, Calgary, and New York. With a diverse team of over 300 professionals from various backgrounds, the firm embraces the belief that architecture goes beyond providing shelter and aims to inspire transformative living experiences. In a rapidly changing world shaped by environmental, technological, and social dynamics, Diamond Schmitt recognizes the power of design to navigate these shifts with confidence, ingenuity, and aesthetic excellence. Their portfolio encompasses a wide range of projects, catering to the needs of cities, individuals, institutions, corporations, as well as both practical-minded individuals and forward-thinking visionaries.

4. Hariri Pontarini Architects

Hariri Pontarini Architects, a Canadian firm committed to creating enduring architectural works, offers comprehensive services to its clients. Established in 1994 by Siamak Hariri and David Pontarini, the Toronto-based office was driven by a shared dedication to design excellence. Today, their practice comprises a team of 150 professionals, ensuring deep partner involvement throughout the design process and leveraging extensive expertise to meticulously oversee construction. HPA recognizes the significance of solid relationships in delivering exceptional projects, and they take pride in cultivating lasting collaborations with all stakeholders involved in the design, development, and construction journey. Their diverse portfolio of award-winning projects showcases HPA's mission to craft architectural and urban solutions that surpass expectations while embodying a sense of restraint and balance, avoiding excesses.

5. BDP Quadrangle

BDP Quadrangle is recognized as one of Canada's prominent architecture, design, and urbanism practices, situated in Toronto. Their extensive expertise extends across various sectors of the built environment, encompassing mixed-use, residential, workplace, retail, transit, media environments, education, and healthcare. Serving as the North American headquarters of BDP, the firm originated in the UK in 1961 as an interdisciplinary design resource. Quadrangle, a well-established practice in

North America known for its exceptional design, business acumen, and integrity, merged with BDP in 2019, subsequently adopting the name BDP Quadrangle in 2020. With a dedicated team of 200 professionals, the studio strives to create environments that foster well-being, inclusivity, and sustainable futures.

6. Atelier RZLBD

Atelier RZLBD, a Toronto-based boutique art and architecture practice, was founded by RZLBD, a versatile creative force whose talents encompass a wide range of disciplines. From art-making and object crafting to building design, installation curation, and even publishing the rzlbdPOST zine, Atelier RZLBD transcends conventional practices. Operating as a positive force, the firm actively contributes, communicates, challenges, and adapts to the unique needs and contexts of each project. The portfolio boasts an impressive array of accomplishments, ranging from designing a delicate 17mm wedding ring to envisioning a sprawling 56 km-long housing proposal. Recognized with numerous accolades, their work has been exhibited in prestigious venues and featured in over 100 print publications, celebrating their distinctive creative vision and innovative approach.

7. acdf architecture

Propelled by its energy and the strength of years of expertise, ACDF creates spaces that combine the qualities of North American pragmatism with European flair. Each proposal is a careful response to the project's objectives and constraints, aimed at maximizing the full potential of the site and the built environment. With a language that is both clear and bold, ACDF favours aesthetic touches that highlight the guiding principles of design. ACDF's achievements have allowed the firm to stand out in Quebec, as well as across Canada and around the world. With its team of 86 employees, the firm can rely on the flexibility of its structure to adapt to projects of various scales, ranging from residential to commercial. ACDF's inventiveness has been recognized with several awards, including the Governor

General's Medal in 2010 and the Young Architect Award from the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada in 2013.

8. YH2_Yiacouvakis Hamelin architectes

L'atelier yh2 is an architectural design studio founded in 1994 by architects Marie-Claude Hamelin and Loukas Yiacouvakis. For yh2, architecture is the art of place, encompassing both the context in which a project is situated and transformed, as well as the more intimate realm of the interior space it creates. The agency strives to be a workshop of research and exploration in architectural design, considering projects in their entirety. Special attention is given to materials, their spatial arrangement, and their theatricality. Every aspect is carefully studied, from architectural integration to the conceptual development of the project, from construction drawings to architectural details, and from interior design to furniture and object design. The concept is developed with efficiency, ensuring that each element serves a necessary purpose in the overall composition.

9. Saucier + Perrotte architectes

Established in 1988 by Gilles Saucier and André Perrotte, Saucier+Perrotte Architectes is a renowned multidisciplinary firm celebrated for its exceptional institutional, cultural, and residential projects on an international scale. The firm's excellence has been recognized through prestigious accolades, including their representation of Canada at the esteemed Architecture Biennale of Venice in 2004 and the reception of numerous awards, such as 8 Governor General's Medals and Awards from the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada, three P/A Progressive Architecture honors from Architecture Magazine, and two International Architecture Awards from the Chicago Athenaeum and the European Centre for Architecture Art Design and Urban Studies. Their highly acclaimed buildings have garnered global attention, solidifying Saucier + Perrotte's position as one of Canada's premier design firms.

10. Perkins&Will

Perkins&Will is a renowned global design practice that places architecture at the heart of its interdisciplinary approach. With a rich history dating back to 1935, the firm has established itself as a leading architectural practice in North America, celebrated for its exceptional design achievements and extensive expertise. Their ability to deliver extraordinary results is evident in their portfolio of diverse and innovative projects across various locations. Recognizing the profound impact of design on people's lives, Perkins&Will is dedicated to transforming living spaces, educational institutions, workplaces, and recreational areas. Functioning as a dynamic laboratory, it serves as a platform for experimentation, research, and engaging discussions with clients and the community. Awards like being named one of Canada's Greenest Employers and one of BC's Top Employers consistently demonstrate Perkins&Will dedication to environmental stewardship, worker well-being, and social engagement. Additionally, they have had the honour of being one of Canada's Top Employers for Young People since 2022.

11. Atelier Carle

Alain Carle brings a unique approach to the architectural practice in Montreal with With two decades of experience in the field. Supported by a dedicated team of creative professionals with diverse expertise, Alain Carle Architecte ensures attentive collaboration and a custom approach to every project, fostering open communication with clients. With a focus on continuity and consolidating their achievements, Alain Carle joins forces with five key collaborators to embark on an inclusive and forward-looking new project. An enduring partnership has now been formalized between the founder, Abel Bravo Muñoz, Leonor Jara, Isaniel Lévesque, Alexandre Lemoyne, and Gabriel Ostiguy, ensuring the longevity of a reflective practice developed over the years. To mark this evolution and accurately reflect the inclusive conceptual approach that unites all partners and team members, Alain Carle Architecte adopts a new identity and becomes AtelierCarle.

12. Provencher_Roy

Provencher_Roy is an award-winning Canadian architectural practice renowned for its commitment to quality, from conception to execution. Claude Provencher and Michel Roy, driven by the desire to share a renewed vision of architecture, established Provencher_Roy in Montreal in 1983. Its organization, structured as human-scale studios, allows different teams the flexibility to foster creativity, exchange ideas, and analytical thinking, always prioritizing the excellence of the idea. Supported by a united workshop, the next generation of Provencher_Roy continues to share the founders' initial vision of engaging in responsible interventions that promote the development of spaces that generate experiences and collective well-being.

13. naturehumaine

Naturehumaine strives to create spaces that improve the quality of our daily lives while keeping in mind the delicate balance between cities, homes, and the human experience. They believe in architecture as a compelling and immersive medium to shape our mental well-being and influence our interactions with the world. Embedded within the specific context of every endeavour lies a unique opportunity waiting to be unveiled and maximized. By carefully deciphering clients'

desires and needs, navigating building regulations, calculating budgets and spatial requirements, and meticulously considering elements like sunlight, views, and movement, they translate and synthesize these factors into shapes, sequences, materials, and persona. Their refined comprehension of effective living spaces drives them to pursue sensitive and harmonious designs that enhance the lives of those who inhabit them.

14. Bourgeois lechasseur / Architectes

In 2010, Olivier Bourgeois and Régis Lechasseur joined forces to establish their architectural firm in Québec, driven by their shared passion for design and a commitment to delivering exceptional projects. With a focus on contemporary architecture that harmonizes with the surrounding landscape, they strive to create dynamic and realistic spaces that exceed their clients' expectations. Client satisfaction is paramount, and they work tirelessly to bring their clients' visions to life. Through their unwavering passion for architecture, Bourgeois/Lechasseur Architects has garnered international recognition and has been featured in prestigious publications worldwide, including a spot in Wallpaper magazine's Top 20 World Emerging Architectural Practices in 2011.

15. MU Architecture

Montreal-based firm, MU Architecture specializes in contemporary architecture and design. They are actively involved in every project, ensuring compliance with North American and European standards and regulations. MU Architecture's portfolio encompasses residential, institutional, commercial, and industrial projects. Their design approach emphasizes sensitivity, conceptual thinking, attention to detail, and craftsmanship. The firm's distinguishing features include adaptability, a focus on the design phase, innovation, sustainable practices, and effective client communication. Driven by passion, architectural talent, and a collaborative mindset, MU Architecture embraces new challenges and dedicates time and effort to achieving success. They believe that architecture reflects society and contributes to the overall architectural culture, incorporating contemporary technologies in their projects.

16. Lemay

Lemay is a multidisciplinary firm that embraces the transformative power of design to shape open and significant spaces for growth. A group of architects, designers, leaders, and change-makers, the firm is committed to designing places which serve people and their communities. They view constraints as catalysts for innovation, pushing boundaries and forging sustainable and purposeful spaces. With strong roots in Montreal, Lemay celebrates diversity and fosters openness throughout its offices and partnerships. The firm combines the expertise of a global design firm with an unwavering commitment to hospitality, recognizing that design is a deeply personal endeavour.

17. 5468796 Architecture

Located in Winnipeg, 5468796 Architecture is a design studio founded in 2007. With a collaborative approach, the firm brings together a team of twenty professionals who share diverse expertise and a common vision for addressing contemporary design challenges. Their projects encompass a wide range of scales and typologies, spanning from advocacy initiatives to branding, objects, architecture, and master planning. The firm has cultivated a particular focus on multi-family housing and urban design, drawing from extensive practical experience and an ongoing exploration of global housing research and built projects.

18. Sid Lee Architecture

Sid Lee Architecture, an architectural and interior design firm, comprises a team of nearly 60 professionals. As an affiliate of the creative agency Sid Lee, the firm benefits from a collaborative and interdisciplinary approach. Founded in 2009, Sid Lee Architecture is led by architects and senior partners Jean Pelland and Martin Leblanc, who bring their expertise and vision to the practice. Since 2015, the firm has been a part of kyu, a collective of creative businesses established by Hakuhodo DY Holdings, one of Asia's largest agency networks. Guided by the belief that a city's beauty lies in its residents, Sid Lee Architecture places emphasis on user-centric designs. Their artisans understand the social responsibility that accompanies architectural projects, creating adaptable and customizable spaces that cater to the ever-evolving needs of individuals.

19. Kearns Mancini

Kearns Mancini Architects, a forward-thinking firm, is dedicated to understanding and defining the essence of each project they undertake. Their unwavering commitment drives them to seek the ideal solution, one that seamlessly integrates end-users into their new spaces while empowering them to thrive. Grounded in their principles, Kearns Mancini Architects strives to transform the human environment with thoughtfulness, embracing innovative approaches to understanding, resolving, and contextualizing new architecture. Their collaborative philosophy, centered on environmental and convivial values, propels urban development forward, enhancing the lives of individuals through intelligent and purposeful change. Continuously staying abreast of cutting-edge sustainable technologies, both passive and active, the firm ensures their work remains effective, diverse, and at the forefront of innovation.

20. APPAREIL architecture

APPAREIL Architecture, a renowned Montreal-based firm, is dedicated to crafting exceptional residential and commercial environments that prioritize the comfort and well-being of their occupants. Drawing inspiration from their Nordic heritage, their design approach is characterized by sleek and contemporary aesthetics. APPAREIL Architecture is committed to striking a harmonious balance between tradition and modernity in their projects. Rooted in their Nordicity, their architecture exudes timelessness and pays homage to their origins. Sustainability is a core value embedded in each of their endeavours, ensuring longevity and resilience for the future.

21. MacKay-Lyons Sweetapple Architects

MacKay-Lyons Sweetapple Architects, headquartered in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada, and with field offices in Lunenburg, Nova Scotia, Oregon, and Massachusetts, is a renowned architectural practice specializing in cultural, academic, and residential projects. With comprehensive expertise in architectural, interior design, and urban design services, the firm is led by two Partners, Brian MacKay-Lyons and Talbot Sweetapple, alongside Managing Principal Melanie Hayne and Design Associate Shane Andrews. With over three decades of experience, they have established a global presence and received more than 150 awards, including the prestigious 2017 Global Award for Sustainable Architecture and multiple honors from the American Institute of Architects (AIA), Architectural Record, and the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada (RAIC).

22. MRDK - Ménard Dworkind architecture & design

MRDK, a Montreal-based firm, is a collective of architects and designers specializing in the creation of commercial spaces, residential architecture, and industrial design. The firm's approach is rooted in the principles of respect for the site, client, craftsmen, and materials, which serve as the foundation for their design philosophy. This approach allows them to seamlessly integrate aesthetics and functionality into their projects. MRDK's design process is detail-oriented, ensuring that every element is harmoniously aligned with the central framework to create a distinctive and cohesive user experience.

Building strong relationships and fostering open dialogue with clients is a fundamental aspect of MRDK's practice. They work closely with clients to understand their ideas, needs, and desires, and then translate them into tangible realities.

23. Dubbeldam Architecture + Design

DUBBELDAM Architecture + Design, located in Toronto, is a renowned multi-disciplinary design studio known for its innovative and environmentally conscious design solutions. Led by architect Heather Dubbeldam, the studio comprises a diverse team of architects and designers. Their design process is characterized by collaborative teamwork and meticulous attention to detail, resulting in projects that demonstrate conceptual clarity. The studio's portfolio includes a wide range of completed and ongoing projects, spanning from single and multi-family housing to commercial and institutional renovations, as well as landscape, furniture, and installation design. With a strong commitment to sustainability, DUBBELDAM's projects are developed and executed with integrity, passion, and perseverance. Their design process prioritizes energy efficiency and the creation of healthy environments for living, working, and recreation.

24. Graziani + Corazza Architects Inc.

Graziani + Corazza Architects Inc., an esteemed architectural firm, is driven by a simple yet profound aspiration: to design buildings characterized by remarkable contemporary aesthetics that harmonize with their surroundings while effectively fulfilling programmatic requirements, thereby maximizing the potential of each project. The firm's success stems from the collaborative partnerships forged between clients and the entire G+C project team. Their design principles are firmly rooted in the use of materials that complement the urban and natural environment, creating sustainable settings for individuals who inhabit the spaces they create. G+C finds ultimate satisfaction in witnessing its buildings embraced by owners, occupants, and the local community. Recognizing the increasing significance of sustainability in design, construction, and land use, the firm actively engages with environmental issues as a member of the Toronto Environmental Alliance.

25. Taylor Smyth Architects

Taylor Smyth Architects is a Canadian practice renowned for their commitment to creating timeless, high-quality buildings. Established in 2000, the firm has garnered international acclaim for its elegant architecture and interiors, both in Canada and abroad. Each project is meticulously crafted, drawing inspiration from its surroundings, the clients' unique preferences, and an emphasis on authentic material expression. Building strong and lasting relationships is at the heart of Taylor Smyth Architects' approach. The firm is guided by fundamental principles that resonate with all individuals, such as the play of light, texture, and color, the use of natural materials, proportion, and a seamless connection to the outdoors. By incorporating these sensitivities along with superior materials and craftsmanship, Taylor Smyth Architects aims to create refined private residences, exceptional public buildings, and transformative redevelopment projects.

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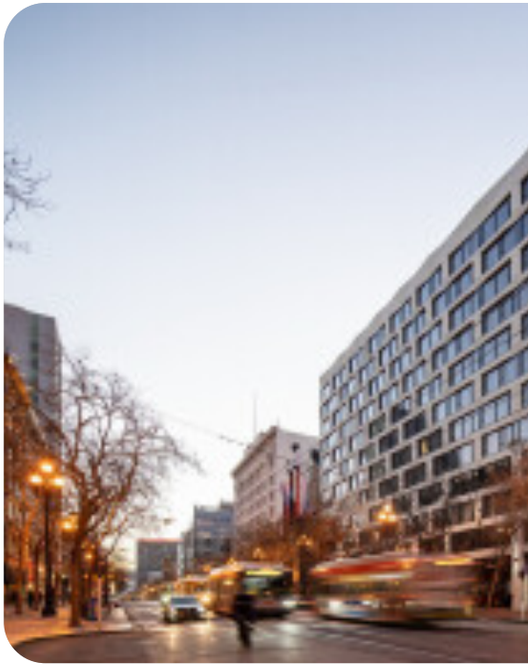

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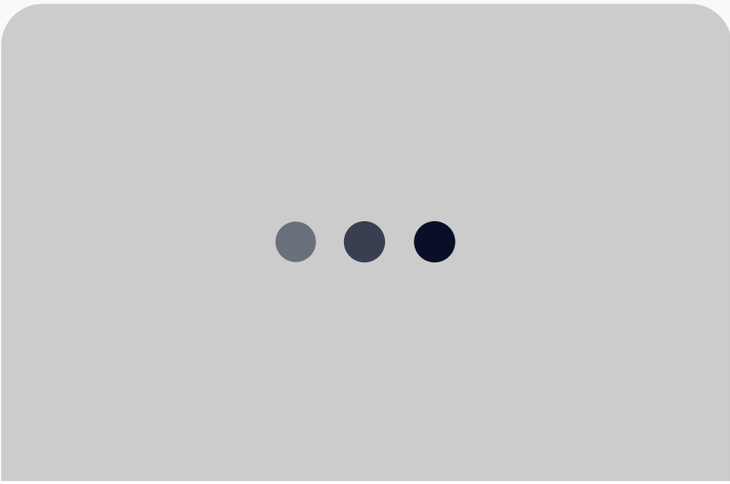

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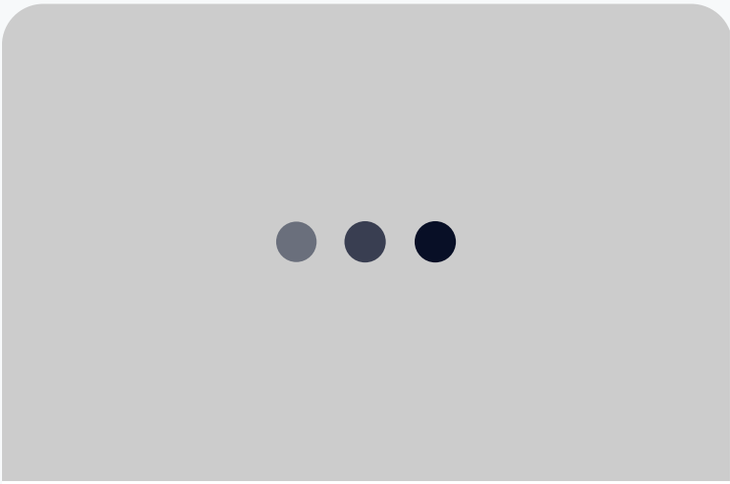

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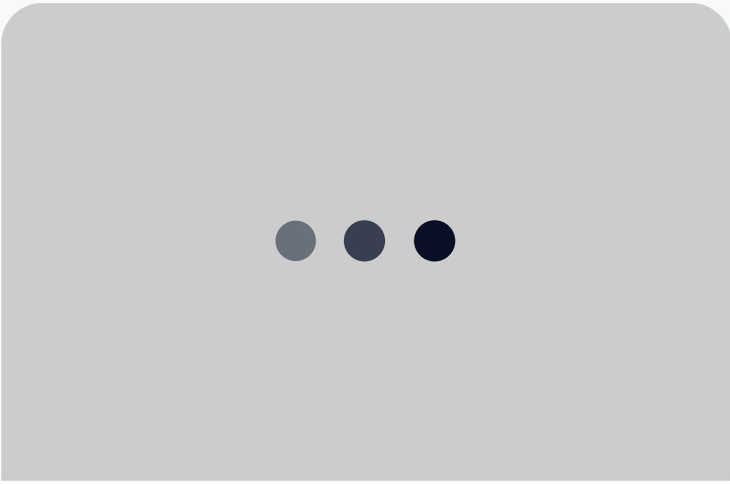

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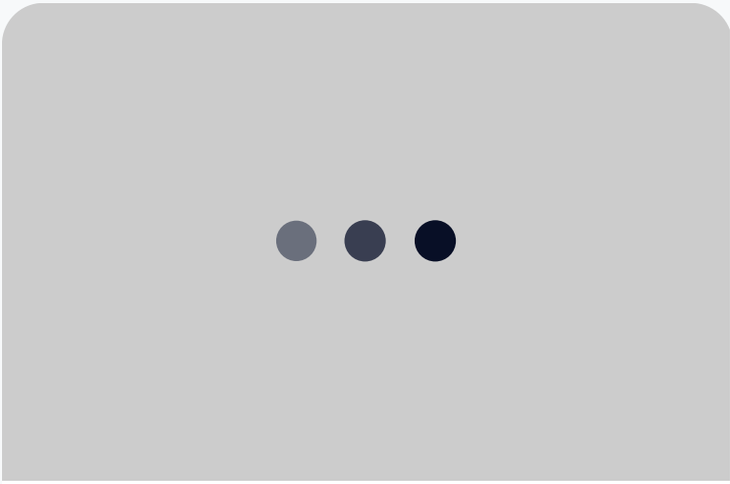

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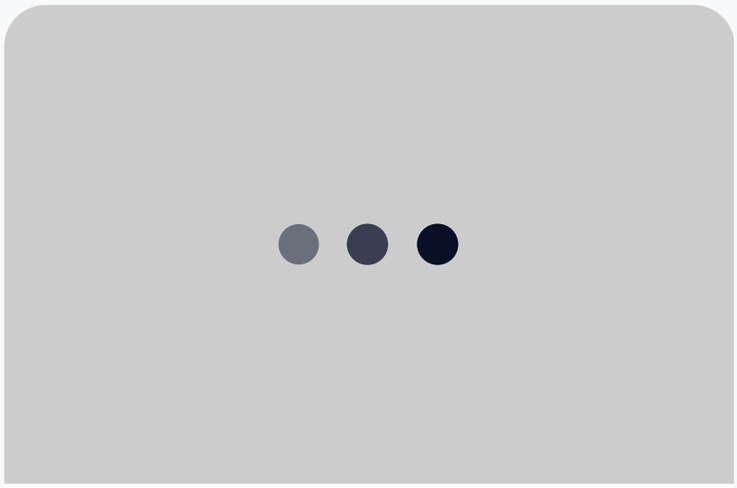

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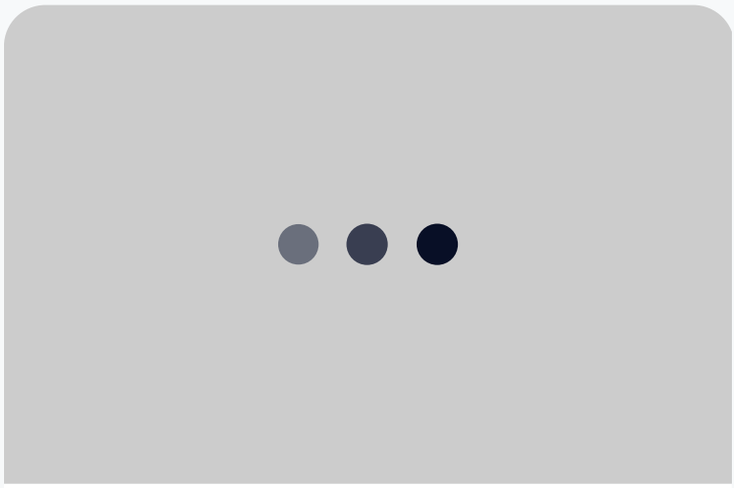

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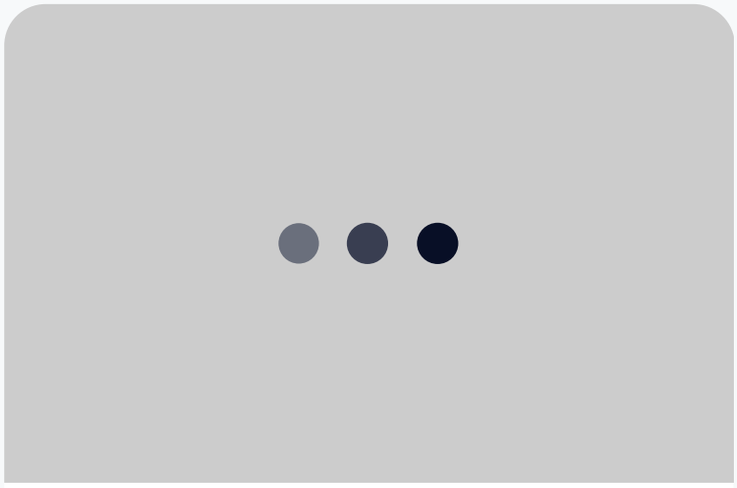

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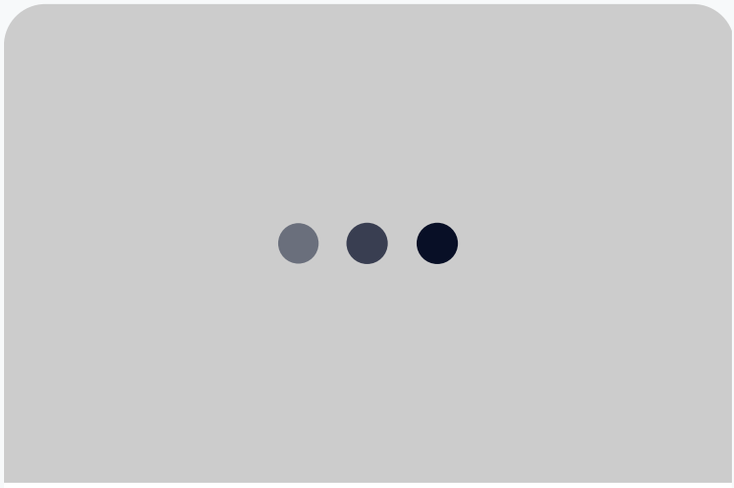

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