



MEET ME AT THE FAIR

A WORLD'S FAIR READER

EDITED BY *Laura Hollengreen, Celia Pearce, Rebecca Rouse, Bobby Schweizer*

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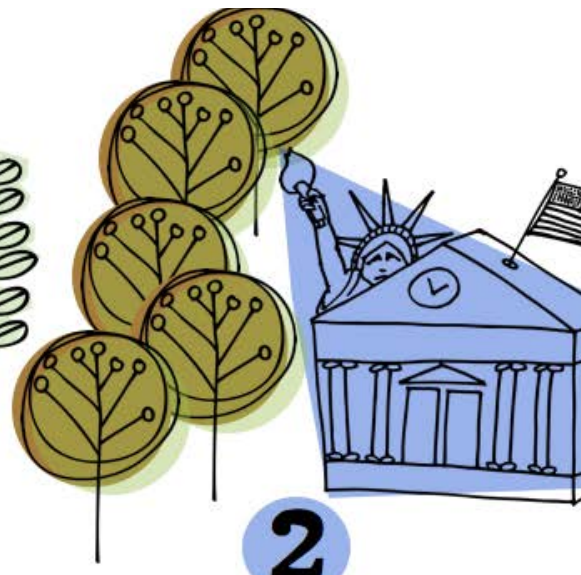
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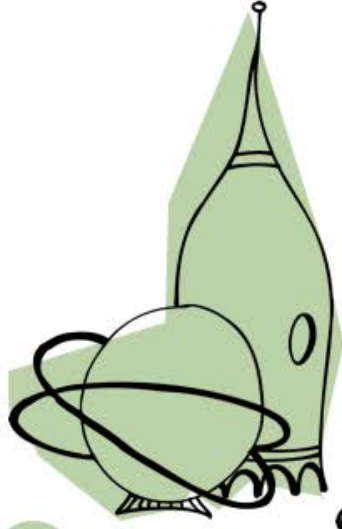
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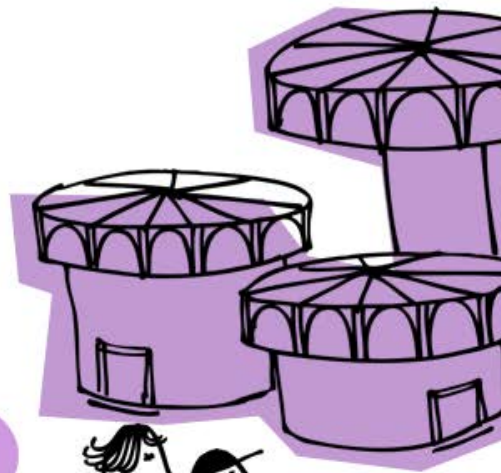
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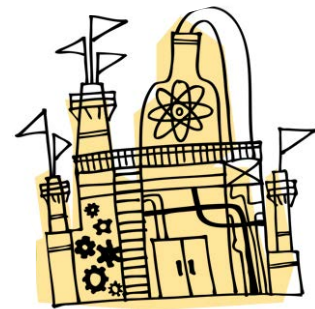
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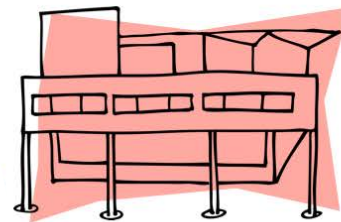
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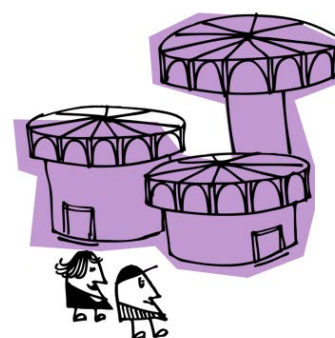
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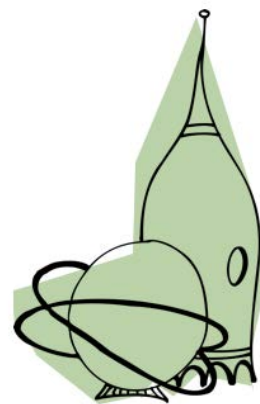
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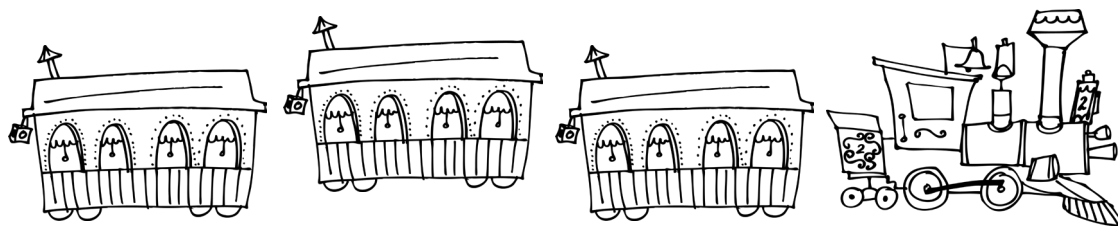
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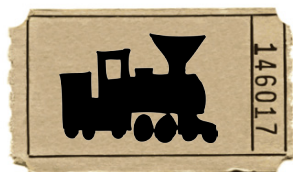
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Because of the complex and interdisciplinary nature of the fair itself, there are many productive and interesting connections between the contributions presented here, both within and between individual pavilions.

To guide the reader along trajectories that connect multiple pavilions, we offer a set of “Tours” through the volume. Much like tour guides available at fairs, each tour suggested here offers a different experience of the collection or a different path to traverse. We have created seven tours presenting alternative navigation options for this volume. In contrast with the organization of the pavilions around broad themes, the tours manifest the following more specialized connections between chapters.



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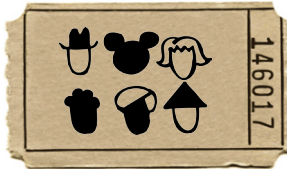
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Preface

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Yesterday I went for the second time to the Crystal Palace. We remained in it about three hours, and I must say I was more struck with it on this occasion than at my first visit. It is a wonderful place—vast, strange, new and impossible to describe. Its grandeur does not consist in one thing, but in the unique assemblage of all things. Whatever human industry has created you find there, from the great compartments filled with railway engines and boilers, with mill machinery in full work, with splendid carriages of all kinds, with harness of every description, to the glass-covered and velvet-spread stands loaded with the most gorgeous work of the goldsmith and silversmith, and the carefully guarded caskets full of real diamonds and pearls worth hundreds of thousands of pounds. It may be called a bazaar or a fair, but it is such a bazaar or fair as Eastern genii might have created. It seems as if only magic could have gathered this mass of wealth from all the ends of the earth—as if none but supernatural hands could have arranged it this, with such a blaze and contrast of colours and marvellous power of effect. The multitude filling the great aisles seems ruled and subdued by some invisible influence. Amongst the thirty thousand souls that peopled it the day I was there not one loud noise was to be heard, not one irregular movement seen; the living tide rolls on quietly, with a deep hum like the sea heard from the distance.

—Charlotte Brontë, 1851¹

For the English writer Charlotte Brontë, there was only one explanation for the wonders on show in London's fabled 1851 Crystal Palace Exhibition: it seemed "as if only magic could have gathered this mass of wealth from the ends of the earth." She was hardly alone in thinking about exhibitions in terms of magic and make-believe. After his visit to the 1867 Paris Universal Exhibition, Danish author and poet Hans Christian Andersen wrote a fairy tale, *The Dryad*, in which he simply declared: "They have built the palace of the modern Aladdin."² Other fiction writers, ranging from Charles Dickens and T. S. Eliot to Jack London and F. Scott Fitzgerald, not mention more recent authors like E. L. Doctorow and Erik Larsen, made exhibitions central for the play of their literary imaginations. This capacity for "make-believe" is central to the human experience, but not that well understood. Perhaps the study of world's fairs and exhibitions can help us come to some deeper understanding of why we

believe what we do, especially if we think of “make-believe” as involving, at least in part, the power to assert a reality that one can persuade others to occupy. This capacity to “make believe,” especially the capacity to make others believe, is fundamental to understanding the influence of world’s fairs in shaping the form and substance of the modern world since the Great Exhibition that Bronte visited in London kicked off the world’s fair movement.

Before elaborating on this proposition, it is important to clear up some points of confusion tied to the term “world’s fair.” Except in the United States, where the term came into common usage in the late nineteenth century, the name is an outlier in the lexicon of exhibitions and fairs. In the United Kingdom, these gigantic, mega-spectacles of technological advance, nationalism, and imperialism, came to be known as “international exhibitions,” sometimes prefaced with the adjective “Great.” On the continent, these events came to be known as “expositions universelles.” By the 1960s, during the height of the Cold War, all of the above monikers were often compressed into the single word, “expo,” which, however useful as an abbreviation, only added to the confusion, especially in the United States, where the word “expo” was also used to describe trade shows of any variety. In an effort to clear up the confusion, the Bureau of International Expositions, the international body established in 1928 to regulate and help plan these events, decided to call them “world expos.” However noble in its intentions to simplify and standardize the nomenclature, the BIE’s decision probably only served to mystify most Americans, who, to the extent they think about these events at all, still think in terms of “world’s fairs.”

So, what’s in a name? In the early twentieth century, names that drew distinctions between small, local fairs and the larger international fairs mattered because so many cities were holding these events that national governments began demanding some degree of taxonomic consistency that would enable them to respond to questions about diplomatic recognition for foreign governments and special tariff treatment for exhibitors. The name bestowed on these events matters today because most Americans believe “world’s fairs” no longer exist (the last such event held in the United States took place in New Orleans in 1984). In the words of one of my undergraduate students, these events seem “way cool,” but, as he put it, they also seem “totally yesterday.” Yet, some 70 million people, mostly Chinese, attended the Shanghai World Expo in 2010 and Milan, Italy is hosting the next major world expo in 2015, with the competition already underway for the 2020 event. In the world of “make believe,” one of the larger fictions that most Americans subscribe to is that these events no longer exist, or, if they do, are unimportant.

On one level, the U.S. government would seem to agree. In 2002, the U.S. government withdrew from membership in the Bureau of International Expositions, thus effectively precluding the possibility that United States would ever again host a “world expo.” On a different level, however, despite its renunciation of membership in the BIE, the U.S. government continues to establish U.S. Pavilions at foreign expos, although it relies on funds from corporations, not the public treasury, to organize exhibits that represent Americans at these events. And, at present, some half dozen U.S. cities have pulled together various

proposals to host a “world expo,” hoping fervently that the U.S. government will resume its membership in the BIE. But what if it doesn’t? Listen to the distant thunder from the 1964 New York World’s Fair. This spectacle, organized by megalomaniac city planner Robert Moses, took place without BIE sanction—it was, after all, a “world’s fair,” not a universal exposition, to use the idiom of the day. Granted, like most of these events, it lost money on gate receipts and had difficulty securing official foreign exhibits, but two of its chief spin-offs, Disney World and EPCOT, have, by all accounts, fared reasonably well. So, at least in some quarters in the United States, “hope” (an approximation of “make-believe”) continues to exist that a world’s fair-like expo will someday take place somewhere in the U.S.

What is the appeal of these events? Why, in the second decade of the twenty-first century, would anyone imagine organizing such an event, given the internet and the availability of world travel? Aren’t world’s fairs, when all is said and done, “totally yesterday?” Perhaps, but the history of world’s fairs is replete with examples of forecasts of the imminent demise of the medium, especially in the 1920s when international exhibitions found themselves competing with new, electronic forms of media like radio and motion pictures. The 1920s, of course, gave way to the era of global economic depression and a wave of “modernist” world’s fairs that swept Europe and the United States in the 1930s. Before jumping to conclusions about the end of world’s fairs, it might be important to determine why world’s fairs originated in the first place. If it seems odd to imagine a world’s fair occurring today, how much more curious to think about why, in the 1840s, before anything on the scale of a world’s fair had ever been held, anyone would have imagined creating and organizing such a thing. Interestingly, answers to both questions, about the history and the future of world’s fairs, have more in common than one might think.

The idea for the first international exhibition, London’s Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations, held in 1851, emerged from a long tradition of agricultural and industrial fairs. When it crystallized in the concept for the fabled Crystal Palace that Bronte visited, it was in the immediate context of the social and political ruptures in England and on the Continent that inspired Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, in 1848, to pen their *Communist Manifesto*. As they watched the rising tides of revolution and demands for political reform sweep the continent and Great Britain, England’s elites (here meaning Prince Albert himself) and their middle-class allies (men like the designer Henry Cole), determined to counter the calls for revolution with a forecast of industrial progress leading to future abundance for all. Under Cole’s guidance, this narrative of a not-so-distant capitalist utopia threaded the exhibits that filled the Crystal Palace, all the while underscoring the magnitude of England’s national and imperial prowess.

In the United States, roughly the same sequence of events spurred America’s international exhibition movement. The industrial revolution, interrupted by the Civil War, spurred efforts by prominent political and economic leaders to demonstrate the viability of the reconstructed American nation-state. Panicked by the Panic of 1873, and by the industrial violence that followed in its wake, national elites redoubled their efforts to hold a world’s

fair in Philadelphia in 1876 to commemorate the centennial of the American Revolution. As economic fault lines continued to spread across the nation in the late nineteenth century, dozens of world's fairs were organized from coast to coast, attracting about one hundred million visitors before the First World War. When the economy again gave way in the Great Depression, world's fairs provided a cultural safety net that provided another generation of Americans with some modicum of faith in the capitalist system now being assaulted by the rise of communist and fascist states on both sides of the Atlantic.

To take the full measure of the expositions, it is worth reflecting on the spread of the exposition movement. In Europe, expositions spread from London to Paris to Vienna to Brussels as well as to much of the globe occupied by European imperial powers, including India and Vietnam. By the early 1880s, a distinctive form of the international exposition, the colonial exposition, was taking form and would culminate in 1931 in the enormous Paris Colonial Exposition that attracted some thirty million visitors. By the onset of the Second World War, according to historian Paul Greenhalgh, about one billion people had visited world's fairs.³ Countless others had performed in them, sometimes as demonstrators of new products, sometimes as racialized specimens of humanity, as was the case at many fairs, including the 1904 St. Louis world's fairs where anthropologists played a crucial role in organizing an outdoor ethnological museum underscoring, in their view, the centrality of "race" for explaining human progress.

Because of their importance for constituting and reconstituting nation-states and for shaping the world political and economic order before the Second World War, it is hardly surprising that national governments again turned to international exhibitions as a medium of choice for influencing the cultural contours of the planet during the Cold War. At this time, long-standing socio-economic anxieties, exacerbated by the worldwide depression of the 1930s, gave way to heightened concerns about thermonuclear destruction as the U.S. and the Soviet Union vied for control of the recently decolonized world. The U.S. government went to work in the early 1950s organizing expositions in Afghanistan and India and Moscow. In the U.S. proper, world's fairs mushroomed across the landscape of Cold War America as Seattle (1962), New York (1964-65), and San Antonio (1968) hosted international expositions. Elsewhere in the world, Brussels (1958) and Osaka (1970) hosted mega-expositions, which continued the long-standing commitment of national governments to promote rapid industrial growth (including, in the case of the Brussels fair with its fabled Atomium, nuclear power) and to define that growth as progress. But, Expo 67 in Montreal represented a turning point. Amidst growing concerns over issues of planetary environmental sustainability, Expo 67 and the fairs that followed in its wake began to give greater emphasis to finding solutions to problems associated with environmental degradation. Most recently, confronted by anti-globalization protests, the rise of terrorism, the chain of events leading to the 2008 "Great Recession," and the "Occupy" movement in the U.S., the "search for order" has led, at least in some quarters, to renewed interest in the exposition medium. Whether a medium that came of age with (and advanced) the industrialization of the planet can offer solutions to climate change, urbanization, and the

ever-expanding chasm between wealth and poverty remains to be seen—or, for better or worse, has already been on view as recently as at the Shanghai Expo with its theme “Better City, Better Life” unfolding in the midst of massive rural/urban shifts that are sweeping China as part of the government of China’s own campaign to modernize and industrialize at breakneck speed.

Given that exhibitions have been organized (and financed with unbelievable sums of private and government-controlled resources) with a view towards making visitors believe in the visions of their planners, have the viewing public and the performers who have been part of the show been taken in? My own research has led me to argue that exhibitions are best viewed as exercises in asserting the authority of political and economic elites, especially around building popular support for specific policies of nation-states centered on programs of imperial expansion. I have also argued that fairs, despite the intentions of their organizers, became sites where women, ethnic and racial minorities, and workers contested dominant ways of seeing them, sometimes exacting important reforms as in the case of the 1934 Chicago fair, where African Americans secured an end to racially-based hiring on the fairgrounds.⁴

For some scholars, however, my emphasis on ideological mapping and intentionality has seemed to diminish the range of experiences visitors had at fairs. Didn’t visitors get lost in the “jumble” of exhibits at the fairs? Didn’t visitors delight in and take pleasure from these events? And what about the people put on display? Is this even the right way to think about these shows? Shouldn’t we instead insist on their roles as performers and their ability through performance art to make fairgoers more cosmopolitan and appreciative of the diversity of the world’s cultures?⁵

For the past generation, a growing number of scholars (note that this collection of essays took form from over one hundred submissions!) have tried to answer these questions while raising new ones about the form and function of such spectacles. Readers will be surprised by some of the topics the authors address: family picnics and modernist architecture, theme parks and Cold War politics, representations of race and gender, and the politics of culture and space more generally. Many essays examine in detail the significance of world’s fair artifacts, those “souvenirs” that carried memories of expositions forward long after the fairs ceased to exist. The editors of this volume have shrewdly put these disparate essays on display here, clustering them into themed sections, “pavilions” the editors call them, that invite readers to discover both the world of fairs and exhibitions and a world of current scholarship that, in trying to make sense of world’s fairs, is also trying to make sense of the ongoing march of modernity into the twenty-first century. This collection isn’t the last word on the subject of world’s fairs and exhibitions; it doesn’t claim to be. But it charts the way towards a much more robust interdisciplinary dialogue about the evolving functions of international exhibitions at different times and in multiple places around the globe.. This volume, in short, is one of those rare books that can serve at once to introduce a new subject to general readers and to advance knowledge for specialists interested in how beliefs about the modern world took shape.⁶

¹Charlotte Brontë to Patrick Brontë, 7 June 1851, in *The Brontës: Life and Letters*, vol. 2., ed. Clement Shorter (New York: Haskell House Publishers, 1969/1908), 215-216.

²Hans Christian Andersen, "The Dryad," from The Hans Christian Andersen Center, http://www.andersen.sdu.dk/vaerk/hersholt/TheDryad_e.html.

³Paul Greenhalgh, *The Modern Ideal: The Rise and Collapse of Idealism in the Visual Arts* (London: V&A Publications, 2005), 119.

⁴Robert W. Rydell, *All the World's a Fair* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984) and *World of Fairs* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993).

⁵See, for instance, James Gilbert, *Whose Fair: Experience, Memory, and the History of the Great St. Louis Exposition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009).

⁶For other useful studies, see Robert W. Rydell, John E. Findling, and Kimberly D. Pelle, *Fair America: World's Fairs in the United States* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2000); John E. Findling and Kimberly D. Pelle, eds., *Encyclopedia of World's Fairs and Expositions*, sec. ed. (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2008); and Paul Greenhalgh, *Fair World: A History of World's Fairs and Expositions from London to Shanghai, 1851-2010* (Winterbourne, Berkshire, UK: Papadakis, 2011).

Introduction

Laura H. Hollengreen | Rebecca Rouse

A BIRD'S-EYE VIEW

Together with the Olympics, world's fairs are one of the few regular international events of sufficient scale to showcase a spectrum of sights, wonders, learning opportunities, technological advances, and new (or renewed) urban districts, and to present them all to a mass audience. The excitement occasioned by early fairs and the exposure of broad publics to experiences and artifacts beyond the ken of daily life are not to be underestimated. Indeed, the phantasmagoria world's fairs offer continues to be compelling for many nations and cities, as well as for visitors, even in the face of significant financial, organizational, and technical challenges. Today, developing countries are eager participants, seeking to stimulate the ambition and enhance the knowledge of their own citizens while also promoting their rapid change to visitors from other countries. While other physical sites of display such as museums have sometimes been perceived to threaten both artifact and visitor with a sense of confinement¹—in the mortuary chill of the institution as archive, on the one hand,² and a restrictive behavioral protocol for the visitor on the other³—the world's fair offers greater, if by no means untrammelled, freedom of access and experience.⁴

Meet Me at the Fair: A World's Fair Reader breaks new ground in scholarship on world's fairs by incorporating a broader than usual array of short new texts. These texts investigate world's fairs from a wide variety of perspectives: political, urban/architectural, anthropological/sociological, technological, commercial, popular, and representational. Indeed, the editors received submissions from scholars in eight different countries and are publishing contributions from authors representing affiliations in academia, museums and libraries, professional and architectural firms, non-profit organizations, and government regulatory agencies. In taking the measure of both the material artifacts and the larger cultural production of world's fairs, the volume presents its own phantasmagoria of disciplinary perspectives, historical periods, geographical locales, media, and messages. This format mirrors the multidisciplinary, microcosmic form of the world's fair itself.

THE BIRTH OF THE FAIR

The simultaneous exposure of contemporary and futuristic wonders from the realms of science, technology, art, and culture links the world's fair with the early modern curiosity

cabinet. Both forms blur the boundaries between education and entertainment, art and science, display and exploitation. A brief comparison of the two will serve to highlight their similarities while also pointing to the changes that have come with industrialization, consumer capitalism, mass society, and the digital revolution.

In their heyday of the sixteenth to seventeenth century, curiosity cabinets were the private projects of gentleman scholars: men with means and erudition enough to amass examples of wonders, not infrequently obtained as trophies of colonial expeditions, and to build libraries to support research on them.⁵ Microcosms of the natural and cultural world,⁶ curiosity cabinets testified to the idea that it might be possible—over the course of a lifetime of study—for a single individual to know everything, to encompass every discipline of learning,⁷ a belief to which few subscribe today. As microcosms, encyclopedic curiosity cabinets were organized for the preservation and display of wonders and were often accompanied by a rigorous descriptive catalogue or inventory that might circulate among other scholars.⁸ While the cataloguing categories and related strategies of display were not those we might employ in a museum today, they do share some of the techniques of display found at world's fairs. In the case of the curiosity cabinet, marvels of human artistry or craftsmanship, including trompe-l'oeil masterpieces and ingenious machines, might be exhibited and described side by side with anomalies of nature, manifesting its protean variability: weird, wonderful aberrations of astounding beauty, gargantuan or miniscule size, or exotic origin.⁹ Before the advent of Lamarckian systems of description and classification, habits of organization were more associative and poetic.¹⁰ With the transition to more formal classification came a shift in emphasis and interest from the eccentric or anomalous—precisely that which stood outside of or violated simple categorization—to the typical, which instead defined it.¹¹ All of which is to say that the collection of curiosities, housed in a private chamber in a domestic setting¹²—a “world of wonders in one closet shut”¹³—presented a remarkably rich, varied spectacle to those who had access to it through the scholarly or aristocratic network of erudite early modern men.¹⁴

The types of border crossings and associative mixes found in the curiosity cabinet can also be found at the world's fair. A similar stimulus to wonder, delight, astonishment, and learning is presented by the latter—but on a vastly larger stage and to a vastly expanded, indeed mass, audience, and often with a public relations or propagandistic agenda. It is well known that the first world's fair, the Great Exhibition of 1851 housed in Joseph Paxton's Crystal Palace in London, was conceived as publicity for the processes and products of British industry and the might of Britain's colonial empire. Undergirding that enterprise was representation of animals and humans in models that testified to earlier stages in the evolution of nature and society, stages branded as primitive. The display of forms of life and culture that, by implication, had been superseded did not stop there, however. Later fairs even included contemporary live human specimens, natives brought to Europe from Africa, Asia, or Oceania for exhibition like animals in a zoo. Presented in habitat settings, they served as examples of strange cultures from around the world—no less weird and wonderful, so the displays suggested, than the anomalies of the curiosity cabinets. By this time, the

nineteenth century, however, the goal was not so much an encyclopedic cataloguing of the known world as it had been in the early modern period (a world which was then expanding considerably through the voyages of discovery and conquest¹⁵) than it was an ideological ordering of societies that placed industrializing European nations at the zenith.¹⁶

Perhaps as a function of fairs' reputation for promoting industry, they are less well recognized for their inclusion of art.¹⁷ The hybrid aesthetic of fairs, allowing for the inclusion in one location of artifacts and events belonging to disparate genres, in fact harks back to curiosity cabinets and represents an attribute more or less abandoned by museums after the eighteenth century. In the context of world's fairs, as opposed to the curiosity cabinet, new technologies—at first photography and film, later digital media—have helped bridge perceived gaps between industry and art in the experience of fairgoers. They have also contributed to the didactic mission of fairs and their popularity as recreational venues. The pleasures of going to the fair (as also to its relative, the amusement or theme park) lie precisely in the departure from daily norm and entry into a fantastic array of demonstrations, rides, performances, games, and souvenirs waiting to tempt the visitor.

The fairgoer's exposure to thrilling exhibits and entertainments is often emblemized in the new or refurbished urban districts in which fairgrounds are located. These districts are conceived as opportunities to implement new planning priorities and innovative strategies, as well as to give rein to the most celebrated designers of the day. Parallel to this is the political dynamism of the fair, due to the opportunity it provides for social mixing in a carnival-like setting less constrained than most other quotidian environments, and in the possibility of a mass audience. Nevertheless, exhibitionary techniques such as spatial hierarchies and ritualized sequences often function to produce and reinforce collective citizen identity while also enforcing certain exclusions.¹⁸

THE FAIR EVOLVES

Influential scholarship on world's fairs published since the mid-1980s has approached analysis of fairs and exhibitions from a cultural studies point of view focused on capitalist and imperialist narratives.¹⁹ According to this work, the main purpose of the fair or exhibition was to display the power of state imperialism (and, later, corporate cultural imperialism), reinforcing dominant narratives of race, gender, class, progress, capitalism, and globalization. Tony Bennett describes museums, fairs, and exhibitions as "... vehicles for inscribing and broadcasting the messages of power," and more specifically as "... providing new instruments for the moral and cultural regulation of the working classes."²⁰ He goes on to explain,

The ambition towards a specular dominance over a totality was [particularly] evident in the conception of international exhibitions which, in their heyday, sought to make the whole world, past and present, metonymically available in the assemblages of objects and peoples they brought together and, from their powers, to lay it before a controlling vision.²¹

In one particularly striking example, Robert Rydell, renowned American scholar of world's fairs, writing together with John Findling and Kimberly Pelle, describes the racist programming of architecture at the 1901 PanAmerican Exposition:

The fair's architects employed a racially encoded hierarchical design: darker, so-called cruder colors at the perimeter gave way to gradually lighter, finer shades in the center of the site. The buildings and exhibits were placed to help coordinate the colors and to be consistent with the clear message that the darker colors represented those people deemed the darker, more primitive races, whereas the lighter colors symbolized those people considered more advanced, light-skinned races.²²

The imperialist project was justified by means of a claimed moral imperative that Caucasian conquest of darker races' territories was conducive to the spiritual and educational good of their peoples. As several chapters in this volume attest, numerous fairs even included exhibit of "natives" from different lands, i.e., living anthropological displays in recreated habitats, as well as historical reenactments.

TECHNO-PROGRESS AT THE FAIR

It seems fitting that this volume about world's fairs and expos makes use of new e-book technology, because as Paula Antonelli notes: "A great world's fair, just like a good sci-fi movie, is a plausible fantasy based on the impact of science and technology on society."²³ The thread of techno-optimism is one that can be traced to even the earliest of world's fairs, the 1851 Great Exhibition in London's Crystal Palace. The signature building of glass and iron, built using modular prefabricated components, was a celebration of "... the innovations of industrialization and mass production."²⁴ Already in their earliest incarnations in Victorian England and late nineteenth-century France, fairs championed technological advancement as a motor of societal development, one that promised peace and prosperity for all.

Much later, in the 1960s, however, attitudes of techno-optimism came to be viewed with skepticism, and a general distrust of authority developed in response to many complex historical and political situations, a cultural shift evident at some fairs. Notably, the "Man the Producer" pavilion at the 1967 Montreal Exposition included exhibits entitled "Man in Control?" and "Progress." These displays portrayed the relationship between people and technologies in more nuanced tones than had been seen at previous fairs. The final image in the "Progress" exhibit displayed a super-highway bridge overlaid with the following text: "Do you think Technology permits us to find new landscapes or merely allows us to ignore the old?"²⁵ A provocative question like this prompted visitors to make up their own minds about the positive and negative impacts of innovation.

If cultural and economic forces must be considered part of the explanation for the decline of the world's fair in the West, it is ironic that many of the technological wonders showcased at fairs may have contributed to its decline as well. An examination of the trend of increasing commercialization at fairs and expositions from 1900-1964 illuminates this point. The 1933

World's Fair in Chicago provides a good example: "Reflecting their conservative Republican economic beliefs, the fair board chose not to seek direct government subsidization for the Century of Progress. [...] The fair board decided to coordinate the pure science exhibits itself and rely on private corporations to show examples of applied science."²⁶ Indeed, Ford's corporate pavilion was the most popular attraction at the fair.²⁷ Moreover, as large-scale government funded projects grew increasingly rare in the United States, corporate involvement in the fair expanded. For the first three-quarters of the twentieth century, corporations found it very much to their benefit to be involved in fairs and expos because these events offered a chance to market their products to a broader audience than was typically reachable preceding the advent of mass media.

The last major fair to be held in the United States, the 1964-65 New York World's Fair, represents a peak of corporatization. Urban planner Robert Moses directed the fair, the theme of which was "Peace Through Understanding." As attested by several chapters in this volume, this fair was the most commercialized yet, with the least government sponsorship, and was highly criticized at the time for these conditions.²⁸ The fair included more American corporations than foreign nations, and "... national pavilions tended to take on the appearance of corporations and vice versa."²⁹ The intensity of corporate involvement was perhaps most strikingly reflected in the fair's logo, "The Unisphere". It was a "gift" of US Steel, which "insisted that anytime the Unisphere was depicted a line saying, "Presented by United States Steel" had to be included."³⁰ Rydell's interpretation of this fair is damning. He describes its flaws, which he largely ascribes to Robert Moses personally, as emblems of the irrelevance of the American fair as a cultural form by this point in time.³¹ Still, while not culturally progressive and very much in keeping with Moses' somewhat retro aesthetic, the four Disney exhibits premiered at the fair were technically innovative and successful entertainments. They eventually found their way into Disney parks, further blurring the line between amusement parks and world's fairs.

In the evolution of technology at fairs and expositions in twentieth-century America, there is a transition from farm implements, machinery, dioramas, and living dioramas to robots, audioanimatronics, and film. Indeed, the increasing dominance of film over other strategies of display at world's fairs, including America's last major world's fair in 1964-65, may reflect the increasing power of the image in twentieth-century Western culture at large. With the Internet today, however, and the expanded role of television as well, corporations find they can reach more consumers more easily at a much lower cost than that of a fair.

A READER'S GUIDE TO THE VOLUME

It is clear that world's fairs and expositions have been understood in many ways: as shrines to new science and technology, commercial marketplaces, sites of nation building, and cultural microcosms. What is perhaps most remarkable about the fair is its polyvalence, its ability to encompass all these expressions in singular sites at specific moments in history. The organization of the volume is intended to capture that polyvalence, resembling the

layout of the fair, with the following thematic sections reflecting the “pavilion” organization of many fairs and expos: Anthropology and Ethnology, American Identity, Science and Industry, Design and Architecture, Operations and Urban Planning, Arts, Entertainment, and Media, Amusements and Recreation, and the Future.

Read in sequence, the chapters in the **Anthropology and Ethnology Pavilion** effectively demonstrate both changes and continuities in western attitudes toward the indigenous or colonized other, attitudes that evolved primarily as functions of imperial identity building, promotion of capitalism, and concerns about authenticity. In the nineteenth century when ethnology was still being defined, “living exhibits” of indigenous peoples in habitat environments moved from unofficial settings outside the boundaries of fairgrounds to more central locations, often in the context of “natural history” halls as at the re-erected Crystal Palace at Sydenham (1854-1866). Highly visible and certainly very popular, living exhibits were typically founded on a spatial or temporal order that declared the cultures (re)presented to be outside of *this place* (thus from elsewhere than the civilized world) and/or outside of *this time* (i.e., belonging to a primitive state associated with past stages of development). In terms of the craft that went into them, the living exhibit habitats and the “natives” they housed—like animals at the zoo—were believed to represent a salutary interpolation of authenticity into the artificially constructed environment of the fairs. However, being in fact atopic and atemporal, they denied agency to anyone other than the curators who planned them, and the spectators to whom they were presented. As the discipline of anthropology grew in strength and professionalism, scholarly voices critiqued such exhibits at fairs, advocating instead an ordered “exposition of knowledge” to be enacted away from the fairground environment, in museums like the Smithsonian Institution. In addition, by the early twentieth century political activists were lobbying strenuously for the rights of those otherwise trapped in the racist, imperialist exhibitionary order. Eventually stripped of their ostensible *educational* value, living exhibits, often mounted with private sponsorship, remained popular for their *entertainment* value at the fair. Once deemed authentic but in fact devoid of “real life,” such displays did not so much present the residents of other places as commodify their bodies and identities in staged cultural representations which were (and are) easy for others to appropriate and inhabit. The indigenous denizen gives way, ineluctably, to the inquisitive daytripper.

The **Pavilion of American Identity** chronicles many of the complex tensions, negotiations and creative responses to change and diversity in the United States through the lens of the fair. This section opens with a discussion of the role of the frontier as both a border and a site of crossings in the development of the American psyche during the transition from the nineteenth to the twentieth century. The World’s Columbian Exposition of 1893 is cast as a turning point for the United States, and a microcosm of the country at the time. It saw the development of new cultural outputs such as an emerging popular culture for the new middle classes, but also new anxieties about class, race, ethnicity, and gender. Burgeoning economic diversity facilitated class mobility for people of many races, resulting in anxieties about the permanence of White dominance for some. The transition from an agricultural

society to an industrial society was well underway by this time, and the lack of a literal frontier challenged ideas about masculinity, resulting in new conceptions of manhood. As the new century progressed, fairs of the 1920s and 1930s saw more significant contributions from women and citizens of diverse ethnic origins. Nevertheless, despite these gains, the fair continued to reflect and, at times, magnify identity-based inequalities in American society. This section concludes with a discussion of the legacy of artifacts of the fair, as creatively appropriated by contemporary hip-hop culture.

The **Science and Industry Pavilion** showcases the promotion of industry that has been central to the world's fair since its inception. A critical contribution to imperial power and national economic health, industry was undeniably dominant at the fairs even as the contexts and modes of its display varied over time. In the nineteenth century, industry shared a part of the world's fair stage with fine arts, which were nevertheless typically housed independently; the presence of fine arts continued to characterize European fairs in their later evolution, distinguishing them from many twentieth-century fairs in the United States. Even at European fairs, the educational value of the display of fine arts also supported nearby sales of the art—and eventually that educational value gave way to entertainment value. In the United States, twentieth-century innovations in the display of industrial processes at world's fairs were made possible by the deep pockets and entrepreneurial energy of corporations such as the Ford Motor Company, General Motors, and IBM. “Process exhibits” showing such things as assembly line production techniques were originally meant to educate a mass public about industry, but they eventually came to focus more directly on the stimulation of consumption, training consumers in brand recognition and the pace of innovation (“planned obsolescence”) in consumer goods. Display of industrial techniques served to build confidence in the quality of consumer goods, and the attendant publicity for those goods—even possibilities of handling them or “taking them for a test drive” at the fair—fostered acquisitive desire. Tellingly, in a bid to avoid what was regarded as the stultifying atmosphere of the museum, many of the most celebrated displays of science, industry, and technology aimed at dynamism by pursuing literal motion (be it moving machines, exhibits, or spectators), a strategy that would attract an audience and also symbolize progress. Spectacles of leisure travel and entertainment initially capitalized on new forms of transport and new media such as photography and film in order to create seductive, immersive environments that seemed to collapse space and time. By the mid-twentieth century, designers such as Charles and Ray Eames moved fluidly between government, corporate, and museum commissions, creating multi-media exhibits at world's fairs that influenced later museum exhibition design and communicated key ideas in science and developments in technology such as the rise of the computer.

The chapters of the **Design and Architecture Pavilion** highlight the innovative and eye-catching architectural design on view at world's fairs in the wake of the precedent set by Joseph Paxton's Crystal Palace of 1851. These chapters also recognize the way in which much twentieth-century avant-garde fair architecture was meant to be exemplary for the wider world, manifesting an integrated vision of a new mass society of production and

leisure, seen in its proper physical environment. Whereas most nineteenth-century fairs played out themes of home and other, nation and empire, industry and craft, sanctioned official culture and unsanctioned popular culture, the twentieth-century fairs in the wake of the world wars sought to come to grips with mass society, housing shortages, explosive demographic growth, and opposing political ideologies. Whether designing for the *homme tout nu* in the modernist *esprit nouveau*, or for different kinds of socialist states, or for the world citizen of the space age, architects capitalized on new materials such as steel and concrete, now in widespread use across building types, as well as major later structural innovations such as space frames to make visible what they conceived as the dwellings, civic buildings, and even urban designs of the future. These might present the *Existenzminimum* of the citizen of mass society, the internationalist or indigenous versions of socialist culture, or the popularization of science at the time of the Cold War, but all drew on the thrill of visionary architecture and the fundamental, visceral power of new spatial experiences to help the public imagine new worlds. Soaring long-span structures, efficient and uncluttered domestic interiors, new geometries and modular forms, sinuous walls, fantastic light effects: all communicated a vision of the future.

Discussing world's fairs at the macro scale, the contributions to the **Operations and Urban Planning Pavilion** highlight the visions and tools of fair planners as well as the technologies that facilitated the operation of fairs as systematic arrays of buildings and attractions. Whether focused on transportation to and around the site, crowd control via admissions surveillance, provision of power to new motorized displays, or the relationship of fairs as temporary events to larger histories of urban development and branding, these chapters take the reader into the realm of visionary plans for the future of cities and societies—and the means of conveying those visions to a broad public. Indeed, new technologies of communication, industrial production, and transportation were harnessed in this effort, exciting both the public and contemporary critics. However, the new visions worried their audiences, too, as planning controls and the fair “apparatus” became gradually less accommodating of the unplanned and unsanctioned popular attractions that had earlier enlivened the perimeter of fair grounds and supplemented the official sights. To the extent that spatial and behavioral control was envisioned, fairs, and the cities that hosted them, risked losing their vitality, their phantasmagoric thrill.

The **Arts, Entertainment and Media Pavilion** presents discussions of theatrical, cinematic, and photographic displays from both within and outside the fair. The contrast between high art forms and midway entertainments is highlighted, as well as the impact of the fairs on the arts and entertainment scenes of host cities. Subversive uses of film and photography that offered powerful critiques of the fair are also presented, along with the role of film in both documenting the fair and reifying propagandistic rhetoric about it and the dominant cultural values it espoused. Finally, the complex interrelationships of emergent electric technologies, cinema, and politics are discussed.

The **Amusements and Recreation Pavilion** collects a variety of examples of ways in which the fair balanced its mission to educate and promote industry with fun and frivolity. The impact of fair designs and strategies on the development of the theme park industry is discussed, as are the significant contributions of Walt Disney to several fairs. Disney's aesthetic of fun, education, and dual emphasis on nostalgia and futurism is seen as both an excellent fit for traditional fair aesthetics, as well as a driving influence in reshaping the fair as a dynamic family entertainment experience. Investigation of cultural artifacts such as fair souvenir books, as well as cultural practices such as open-air picnicking at fairs, makes it possible to delve more deeply into the ways in which amusement and recreation were both produced and negotiated at the fair. Finally, EPCOT is analyzed as an example of a post-fair variation on the fair: permanent but changing, both heavily influenced by and a notable departure from the fair tradition.

The **Pavilion of the Future** examines the ways in which the fair was a site for display of innovation in industry, a forum for nations to express emerging identities, and a cause of anxiety for some regarding industry's promise of a highly-technologized future society. This section also presents the aftermath of the fair in terms of fairs' impacts on host cities, as well as the ways in which future impacts were (or were not) considered during the planning and construction of more recent fairs. The section closes with a look back to the iconic 1939 New York World's Fair, and a discussion of the presence of contemporary aviation technology's influence on the pervasive, futuristic theme of ascension at that fair.

TOURING *MEET ME AT THE FAIR*

Because of the complex and interdisciplinary nature of the fair itself, there are many productive and interesting connections between the contributions presented here, both within and between individual pavilions. To guide the reader along trajectories that connect multiple pavilions, we offer a set of "Tours" through the volume. Much like tour guides available at fairs, each tour suggested here offers a different experience of the collection or a different path to traverse. We have created seven tours presenting alternative navigation options for this volume. In contrast with the organization of the pavilions around broad themes, the tours manifest the following more specialized connections between chapters:

- 19th Century Fairs
- International Fairs
- Exhibition & Curation
- Political Movements
- Emergent Practices
- Mascots, Symbols, & Caricatures
- Remains of the Fair

We hope these additional trajectories through the book will highlight the polyvalent nature of the fair, as well as the interdisciplinary richness of the scholarship collected here.

THE FUTURE OF THE FAIR?

Perhaps Americans no longer produce fairs because we are always already at the fair. There's no need to visit a Venezuelan Pavilion to purchase textiles made by indigenous artisans when one has easy access to such goods in the global marketplace of Amazon.com, Pier 1, Cost Plus World Market, Ten Thousand Villages, and more. Most specialty goods are available for purchase by anyone with Internet access and a credit card. Indigenous communities living in remote, rural locations in some cases have access to cell phones and Internet. Seeing indigenous cultures in their natural "habitats" is as easy as switching the channel to the National Geographic or Discovery station on your television. True global capitalism is in full swing, aided in part by the implementation of the modern shipping container system by Malcom McLean. By 1966 transatlantic container shipping had become a reality, forever changing the circulation of goods, money, and ideas.³² Stephen Van Dyk has pointed out additional factors contributing to the decline of the fair in the West:

"Electronic and communication devices that premiered at fairs now provide ubiquitous and instantaneous information on new products and technological advancements. Amusement sections that were once standard attractions at fairs have been replaced by theme parks, while museums have become the major venues for displays of natural science, inventions, and fine and decorative arts."³³

Adding to the pull away from the fair exerted by theme parks and museums, 1978 marked the deregulation of air travel in the U.S., which meant that travel became more affordable and common for more people.³⁴ The fair was no longer needed to introduce Americans to foreign cultures, as we could now visit most countries ourselves. The Cold War's end, with the Soviet Union's dissolution in 1991 and the 1989-90 reunification of Germany, also influenced the increasing popularity of travel. In addition, simulacra of foreign cultures have become available in theme park attractions that echo the international pavilions of past world's fairs, such as the World Showcase at Walt Disney World's EPCOT.

More broadly, globalization together with media penetration has changed attitudes regarding racism. Overtly imperialist narratives are met with suspicion and disdain in much of contemporary culture. However, the "freaks" of anthropological dioramas past are still present in our living rooms whenever we choose, thanks to the multiplicity of television shows such as Frontline's "The World's Tallest Man" and CNN's on-location reporting at the sites of natural disasters and conflict zones in developing countries, not to mention the spectacle of daytime talk show programming.³⁵ These shows are also increasingly circulated, watched and re-watched over Internet connections on television network sites and YouTube.com.

Lest the fair appear to be entirely moribund, we should note that while cultural shifts and evolving late capitalism from the 1960s on began to sound a death knell to the fair in the West, the 1970s marked the birth of a new fair in the East, with the first major Asian fair taking

place in Osaka, Japan. The cultural form of the fair lives on today with important resonance in Asia. With lavish support from national governments, the development of these fairs parallels that which propelled the success of American fairs in the twentieth century as they promoted America's burgeoning industrial prowess. The theme of the Shanghai Expo of 2010, "Better City, Better Life," can be seen as a continuation of the classic idea of the fair. In an article on the Expo's web site reporting on the closing ceremonies, the Expo is lauded as "The first of its kind staged in a developing country, ... [attracting] 246 participating countries and international organizations and 73 million visitors." The web site notes that both figures are records in the history of expos.³⁶

At the time of this writing, in 2014, we can look back fifty years to a prescient world's fair observer, Isaac Asimov, who was then looking forward at us. In an article entitled "Visit to the World's Fair of 2104," published in the *New York Times* on August 16, 1964 and reprinted as an epilogue to this volume, Asimov imagined our world, taking his cue from the displays at that year's New York World's Fair. Asimov envisioned many of the features of a technology-assisted life that we indeed now take for granted: the ubiquity of video communication, quick and easy phone service around the globe, the centrality of computers and computer education, sensor controls in many everyday appliances and their cordless operation, etc. Asimov also predicted a continued emphasis on innovation in the cultivation and handling of food and agricultural technology, a concern that has been central to fairs since their inception and continues today with the focus on sustainable food systems at the upcoming Expo Milano 2015. The slogan of the Expo expresses its optimism: "Feeding the Planet: Energy for Life." Even more astounding, however, are Asimov's prognostications on larger societal phenomena such as growing disparities in the distribution of wealth, rampant population growth, and the potential boredom of a heavily mediated, denatured people. Although not all of Asimov's predictions proved to be accurate, readers of this volume may well agree with his penultimate dictum:

The lucky few who can be involved in creative work of any sort will be the true elite of mankind, for they alone will do more than serve a machine.

¹Tony Bennett, "The Exhibitionary Complex," in *Thinking about Exhibitions*, ed. Reesa Greenberg, Bruce W. Ferguson, and Sandy Nairne (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), 81, citing Douglas Crimp, "On the Museum's Ruins," in Hal Foster, ed., *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture* (Seattle: Bay Press, 1985), 45. See also Nelson Goodman's pun on the theme of confinement in his comparison of the museum to a house of detention, as well as to a house of rehabilitation, house of pleasure, ballpark, and hospital. Nelson Goodman, "The End of the Museum?" in *The Idea of the Museum: Philosophical, Artistic and Political Questions*, ed. Lars Aagaard-Mogensen (Lewiston, New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 1988), 139-55.

²Didier Maleuvre, *Museum Memories: History, Technology, Art* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), 15-21.

³The expectations for proper behavior and moral uplift are humorously exposed in the published transcript of a performance art piece disguised as a docent's talk at the Philadelphia Museum of Art: Andrea Fraser, "Museum Highlights: A Gallery Talk," *October* 57 (1991): 105-22. Note the epigram by Foucault that precedes the article.

⁴Tony Bennett, "The Exhibitionary Complex," 81-112.

⁵See Arthur MacGregor, *Curiosity and Enlightenment: Collectors and Collections from the Sixteenth to the Nineteenth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008) and *Curiosity and Wonder from the Renaissance to the Enlightenment*, ed. R.J.W. Evans and Alexander Marr (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2006).

⁶Joy Kenseth, "A World of Wonders in One Closet Shut," in *The Age of the Marvelous*, ed. Joy Kenseth (Hanover, NH: Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth College, 1991), 97.

⁷*Ibid.*, 83.

⁸Paula Findlen, "The Museum: Its Classical Etymology and Renaissance Genealogy," *Journal of the History of Collections* 1/1 (1989): 59-78.

⁹Kenseth, "A World of Wonders in One Closet Shut," 81-83.

¹⁰Carla Yanni, *Nature's Museums: Victorian Science and the Architecture of Display* (London: Athlone, 1999), 18-19.

¹¹Kenseth, "A World of Wonders in One Closet Shut," 97.

¹²Findlen, "The Museum," 69-70.

¹³Kenseth, "A World of Wonders in One Closet Shut," 87-88.

¹⁴Yanni, *Nature's Museums*, 16-17.

¹⁵Findlen, "The Museum," 66-68.

¹⁶Timothy Mitchell, "Orientalism and the Exhibitionary Order," in *Colonialism and Culture*, ed. Nicholas B. Dirks (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992), 289-317.

¹⁷Findlen, "The Museum," 68.

¹⁸Maleuvre, *Museum Memories*, 13-14.

¹⁹The dean of American scholars of world's fairs is Robert W. Rydell who has published a number of book-length studies, sometimes in collaboration with other scholars: Robert W. Rydell, *All the World's a Fair: Visions of Empire at American International Expositions, 1876-1916* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984); *idem*, *World of Fairs: The Century-of-Progress Expositions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993); *idem* and Nancy E. Gwinn, eds., *Fair Representations: World's Fairs and the Modern World* (Amsterdam: VU University Press, 1994); *idem*, John E. Findling, and Kimberly D. Pelle, *Fair America: World's Fairs in the United States* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2000).

²⁰Tony Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics* (New York and London, Routledge, 1995), 82 and 95.

²¹*Ibid.*, 88.

²²Rydell, Findling, and Pelle, *Fair America*, 49.

²³Paola Antonelli, "Of Imaginary and Concrete Fantasies," in *Exit to Tomorrow: World's Fair Architecture, Design, Fashion 1933-2005*, ed. Andrew Garn, Paola Antonelli, Udo Kulturmann, and Stephen Van Dyk (New York: Universe Publishing, 2007), 6.

²⁴Udo Kulturmann, "Anticipation of the Future: The Origin and History of World's Fairs," in *Exit to Tomorrow*, ed. Garn et al., 10.

²⁵Expo 67 archival website, <http://expo67.ncf.ca> [accessed 9-15-12].

²⁶Rydell, Findling and Pelle, *Fair America*, 78-80.

²⁷Ibid, 85.

²⁸Ibid, 107. See also Lawrence Samuel, *The End of Innocence: The 1964-65 NY World's Fair* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2007), 96-97.

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰Ibid, 99.

³¹Ibid, 110-12.

³²Marc Levinson, *The Box: How the Shipping Container Made the World Smaller and the World Economy Bigger* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 169.

³³Stephen Van Dyk, "Looking to the Future: World's Fairs 1933-1980s," in *Exit to Tomorrow*, ed. Garn et al., 219.

³⁴Chuck Y. Gee, James C. Makens, Dexter J. L. Choy. *The Travel Industry*, third ed. (New York, Wiley, 1997), 74.

³⁵Andrea Stulman, "The Dime Museum Freak Show Reconfigured as Talk Show," in *Freakery: Cultural Spectacles of the Extraordinary Body*, ed. Rosmarie Garland Thomson (New York: New York University Press, 1996), 321-22.

³⁶Shanghai Expo Website, <http://en.expo2012.cn> [accessed 9-15-12].



ANTHROPOLOGY & ETHNOLOGY PAVILION

SECTION 1



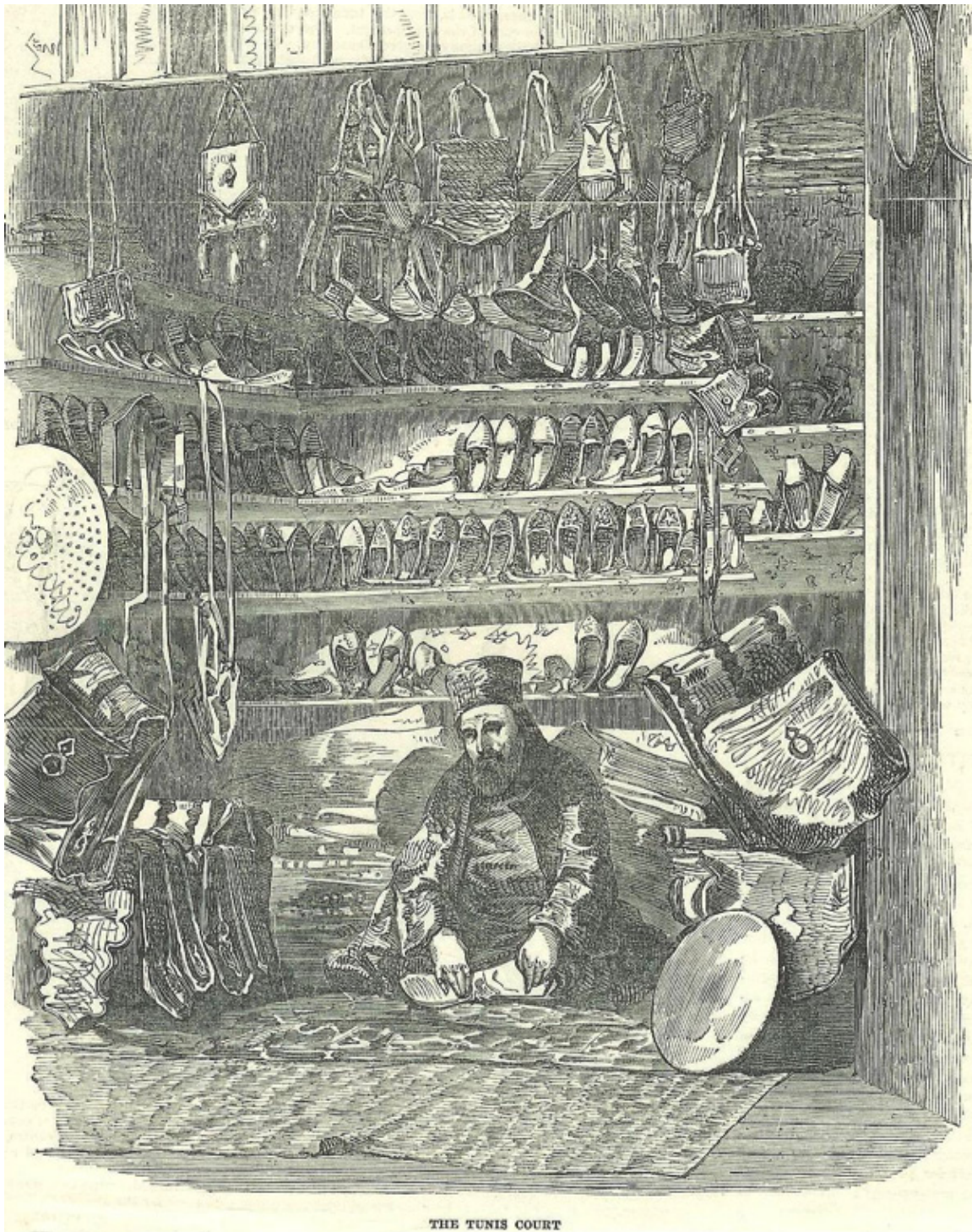
1.1.

When “The Present European Family” Contemplates “The Phases of Human Existence”: The Court of Natural History at the Crystal Palace, Sydenham, 1854-1866

Fanny Robles

“I discovered that if I were to stay there a month, I should still find myself looking at the people instead of the inanimate objects on exhibition.” This is what Mark Twain wrote about the 1867 Exposition Universelle in Paris, in his travel book *The Innocents Abroad* recording his experiences in Europe and the Holy Land. “I got a little interested in some curious old tapestries of the thirteenth century, but a party of Arabs came by, and their dusky faces and quaint costumes called my attention away at once. I watched a silver swan, which had a living grace about his movements, and a living intelligence in his eyes—watched him swimming about as comfortably and as unconcernedly as if he had been born in a morass instead of a jeweler’s shop—watched him seize a silver fish from under the water and hold up his head and go through all the customary and elaborate motions of swallowing it—but the moment it disappeared down his throat some tattooed South Sea Islanders approached and I yielded to their attractions.”¹ Reading Twain, one sees how the “exhibit” could be a shifting category in world’s fairs, the onlooker rapidly becoming the object of the visitor’s gaze, as if he were himself a moving item on display.

Sadiya Qureshi records the first use of a living foreign person in the very first international fair: the “native *custodien*” of the Tunis Court at the 1851 Great Exhibition in London’s Crystal Palace (Fig. 1). She also notes that the Palace displayed the various Hindu castes, illustrated by a collection of more than sixty groups of models, as well as North and South American peasants represented by wax models in the fine art court, all wearing their national costumes and cast into tableaux.² When the Palace reopened in Sydenham in 1854, the Court of Natural History developed what had been done in 1851 to a much grander scale. It was building on a curiosity for human difference that had already been stimulated by the capital’s ethnological shows, while retaining the educational aim of the original Crystal Palace. This claim that it was educating the visitors was nevertheless questioned, and the Court came to reflect the cultural, social and political climate of a society in which the new science of ethnology and its reception were critical to a number of issues, in the Empire and at home.



THE TUNIS COURT

Figure 1. "The Tunis Court," *Illustrated London News*, 31 May 1851, p.294.

THE COURT OF NATURAL HISTORY

Three years after closing down in Hyde Park, at the end of the Great Exhibition, the Crystal Palace reopened in Sydenham, South London. The building, described by John Ruskin (1819-1900) as a "magnified conservatory",³ was twice as large as the original. Before criticizing its architecture, the art critic went on to compare the Palace with a traditional Swiss landscape, unfolding before his eyes while he was "read[ing] an account in the *Times* newspaper of the opening of the Crystal Palace at Sydenham":

There was a strange contrast between the image of that mighty palace, raised so high above the hills on which it is built as to make them seem little else than a basement for its glittering stateliness, and those lowland huts, half hidden beneath their coverts of forest, and scattered like gray stones along the masses of far-away mountain. Here man contending with the power[s] of Nature for his existence; there commanding them for his recreation; here a feeble folk nested among the rocks with the wild goat and the coney, and retaining the same quiet thoughts from generation to generation; there a great multitude triumphing in the splendor of immeasurable habitation, and haughty with hope of endless progress and irresistible power.⁴

The symbolic triumph over the landscape was matched by the historical manifestations of human progress inside, where the vestiges of past civilizations—such as Egypt, Byzantium, Greece, and Rome—were exhibited alongside courts of industrial productions from Birmingham and Sheffield. One of the major innovations of the Sydenham Palace was its Court of Natural History. Life-size plaster casts of “natives” from all around the world were displayed, painted to match their natural skin tones and ornamented with fake hair, eyebrows, eyes and nails.⁵ Some of the casts had been taken from live performers, such as the “Zulu Kafirs,” who were themselves displayed in London at the time (Fig. 3). The models were surrounded by plants and stuffed animals, arranged in their respective ecological niches. The curator of the Ethnological Section, Dr Robert Gordon Latham (1812-1888), advertised it as a groundbreaking enterprise:

The plan, however, of the group under notice, is different from that of ordinary museums, and, at the same time, one which is, now, for the first time attempted. The trees, the plants, animals, and human occupants of the different portions of the earth's surface are grouped together - so that the allied sciences of botany, zoology, and ethnology illustrate each other. Hence, the arrangement is *geographical*.⁶

Separated into sections representing the five continents (Fig. 2), the human “specimens” were displayed in vivid tableaux, such as a hunting scene opposing two Mexicans and a jaguar or the South African Zulus mentioned above who were engaged in the search of a lost article (Fig. 3).

As shown by Latham's guide to the Court, which spent seventy-four pages defining the discipline of “ethnology,” the displays' aim was essentially educational. Qureshi points out the cheapness of the guide (only 6d), which, together with its very accessible style, allows one to think that it was one of the most widely used ethnological works of the 1850s.⁷ John Conolly, who was then president of the Ethnological Society (founded in 1843), even saw the display as a means to find young converts to this new discipline:

They are daily viewed by numerous young people, by whom they will never be forgotten. Many of these will visit many lands; and among them, prepared as they may be by correct acquaintance with the principal characteristics

of various races, there will be found some, no doubt, who will furnish this country with valuable additions to Ethnological knowledge, from many quarters of the globe.⁸

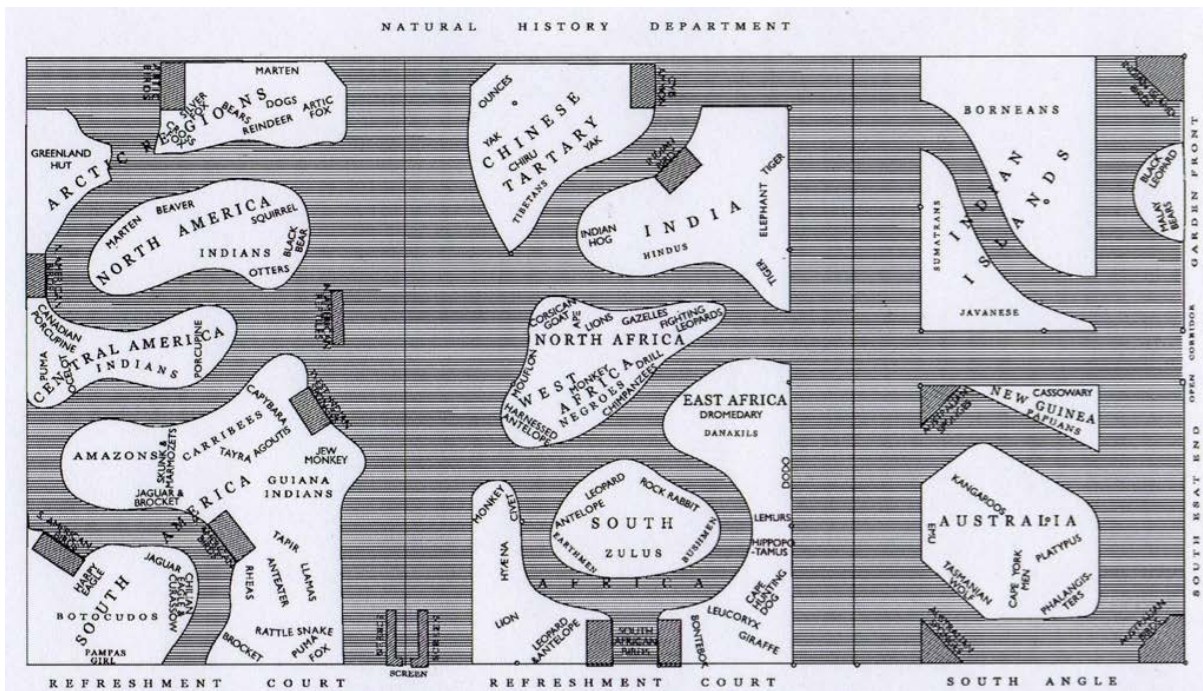


Figure 2. Map of the Natural History Department, Sydenham (Samuel Phillips, Guide to the Crystal Palace and park, 2nd edition, London, [1854]).



Figure 3. Models of the Zulus at the Crystal Palace, Enrico Angelo Ludovico Negretti and Joseph Warren Zambra, 1863.

The global circulation of ethnologists-to-be was part and parcel of the growing British Empire, whose supposed evolutionary superiority was central to the understanding of the Court and the Palace as a whole. Building on what Johannes Fabian calls a “denial of coevalness”, the visitors and guide writers would inevitably identify the “natives” on display as the modern ancestors of Europeans, showing “a persistent and systematic tendency to place the referent(s) of anthropology in a Time other than the present of the producer of anthropological discourse”.⁹ In his guide to the Palace, Samuel Phillips would thus urge the visitors to see the peoples on display as their ancestors’ equivalent, hereby asking for a more respectful attitude towards their strange customs and outfits:

If the visitor should feel astonishment in the presence of some of the phases of human existence here presented to him, he may do well to bear in mind, that they are representations of human beings endowed with immortal souls; to whose capabilities we may not place a limit, and that it is not yet two thousand years since the forefathers of the present European family tattooed their skins, and lived in so savage a state, that late archaeological researches induce us to suspect they were not wholly free from one of the worst charges that is laid to savage existence ; viz. the practice of cannibalism.¹⁰

CALLING TO MIND “URBAN SAVAGES”

This representation of “savages” as fellow “human beings endowed with immortal souls” echoed the motto *uno sanguine* (“of one blood”) of the Aborigines Protection Society, founded in 1837. This society was devoted to the protection and study of newly discovered peoples around the globe. The members who were more interested in the studying than the protection of the “natives” created the Ethnological Society in 1843 and kept their evangelical monogenistic bent.¹¹ Latham was a prominent member of this new group. Phillips’s description of the peoples on display as capable of unlimited improvement was also in keeping with the Victorian “civilizing mission” and the justification of imperial expansion. From the 1840s onward, the evangelical mission abroad came under criticism in Britain and, although it kept flourishing, it had to face the accusation of privileging the heathen abroad over the poor at home.¹² This phenomenon was called “telescopic philanthropy” by Charles Dickens who satirized this attitude in his novel *Bleak House* (1852), in which the philanthropist Mrs. Jellyby spends her time writing letters to help African natives while overlooking her own children. The satirical newspaper *Punch* picked up on this double standard to imagine a new addition to the Palace: a Court representing the “back slums” of Spitalfields, Lambeth, Soho and Bethnal Green, faithfully reproducing the housing of these places, together with life-size figures (Fig.4):

In their introduction of these figures the directors are but following the course they have pursued with respect to the uncivilized tribes of Central Africa; and it will be seen that in domestic cleanliness and comfort, the natives of that region are but little behind those of Central London.¹³



Figure 4. "The Model Court," *Punch*, November 18, 1854.

People had still in mind the best-selling work of the journalist Henry Mayhew (1812-1887), who had published his newspaper *London Labour and the London Poor* from 1850 to 1852—to be collected and revised in 1861-1862—in which he characterized himself as a “traveler in the undiscovered country of the poor”, bringing back stories about people “of whom the public had less knowledge than of the most distant tribes of the earth”.¹⁴ Borrowing from the naturalist and military surgeon Andrew Smith (1797-1872) and the physician James Cowles Prichard (1786-1848), Mayhew separated the civilized from the uncivilized along the lines of a distinction between settlers and wanderers, stating that “to each civilized tribe there is a wild horde attached”.¹⁵ As Qureshi has pointed out, Mayhew’s work lacked the theoretical coherence it would have needed to be a real work of ethnography, but he did

introduce a certain language of “colonial expansion and exploration”¹⁷ through which urban social divisions came to be conceived. This later led the social reformer and founder of the Salvation Army William Booth (1829-1912) to write *In Darkest England and the Way Out* (1890), in which he asked: “As there is a darkest Africa, is there not a darkest England?”¹⁸ As Qureshi recalls, Mayhew was heir to a long-standing tradition of portraying London streets, and urban spectators were encouraged to read people’s faces thanks to what Qureshi calls “pocket physiognomy”: manuals, articles and pamphlets trained readers in physiognomic expertise, decades after the publication of Johann Casper Lavater’s founding *Essay on Physiognomy* (1789-98).¹⁹ The same walking observation was also at stake in the Court of Natural History, where Latham claimed that he did not think it necessary to represent the European peoples, as it was “supposed that the character of most European populations [was] sufficiently understood.”²⁰ The curator would nevertheless encourage the visitors to compare themselves with the exhibited:

[...] it is hoped, that the groups to which the visitor is directed will sufficiently tell their own tale. The extent to which they differ from each other is manifest. Still more do they differ from such groups of Englishmen, Frenchmen, Germans, and other Europeans as may collect around them.²¹

Punch followed up humorously on Latham’s cue, arguing that:

In the Crystal Palace it has not been thought necessary to make a collection of the specimens of European objects, for there will always be found among the visitors themselves a collection of living curiosities of the various populations of Europe. Of these a moving cosmorama will be constantly kept up, and a little comparative anatomy will be quickly studied, by reviewing the bearded fop side by side with the Chimpanzee in his primitive condition.²²

This brings to mind Twain with his permanent human distractions from the displays of the 1867 Exposition Universelle. In the Crystal Palace in Sydenham, the greatest distraction of all for the middle-class and upper middle-class seems to have been the working class, on whom the educational impact of the exhibition was in danger of being lost.

PALACE OF THE PEOPLE: INSTRUCTION OR AMUSEMENT?

The writer and art critic Elizabeth Eastlake (1809-1893), who was married to the director of the National Gallery, wrote that the impression she had of being lost in the maze of objects of the Crystal Palace was somehow balanced by the comfort of another experience:

But here, more than ever before, we feel that we are not alone, nor that our imaginary class of society is here alone—here, still more than before, we feel how good it is to be brought in contact with multitudes of our fellow creatures, otherwise too seldom met by us except in some form that appeals to pity or censure—multitudes of the humble and the unknown wandering like ourselves through a maze of innocent pleasures, and loving to have them so.²³

Attracting the “multitude” was indeed the official aim of a Palace which claimed to be the “palace of the people”. As Eastlake put it, “[a]ll civilized nations ha[d] recognized the amusement of the people to be a social and political necessity, or ha[d] suffered morally from the neglect”.²⁴ This idealistic enterprise was praised by French visitors such as Alphonse Esquiros who wrote, in the highbrow miscellany *La Revue des deux mondes*, that the Palace was built on the idea of “instructing the masses while entertaining them,”²⁵ or Benjamin Delessert, writing for the same paper that the Palace was “a means of improvement for all humanity”.²⁶ It was even advertised as a palace *of* the people *for* the people: being a joint-stock enterprise, it was presented as “an evidence of the wealth and noble spirit of enterprise which pervades every class of society.”²⁷ The huge garden of the Palace was itself “educational in a social and political sense”, as the writer and social theorist Harriet Martineau (1802-1876) put it, in that it was opening up “pleasures, hitherto altogether aristocratic, to the multitude”.²⁸ The question of the actual effectiveness of the educational enterprise was asked very early on, when one of the directors of the original Palace in Hyde Park wrote in a pamphlet in 1851:

A permanent foundation for the support of schools, the payment of masters, and the reward of deserving pupils, would form a far more noble monument to the genius, energy, industry which continue to render successful the Great Exhibition of Industry, than the scenery of a Winter Garden for London belles and beaux.²⁹

Noticing that “[w]hat books and travels are to young people, the Crystal Palace is to the multitude in the mood of recreation,” Martineau set to observing the crowds as they moved around the Palace, overhearing conversations which “[were] often very painful, and sometimes astonishing and mortifying beyond measure; but it is therefore all the more necessary that we would hear them.”³⁰ She then went on to notice that “the largest crowd [was] always to be found in the Natural History department” (she later made the same remark for the class of school-children, artisans and trades-people) and described the attitude of a typical working class visitor: “The labourer in the smock frock wanders with his hands in his pockets, from one group of savages to another, evidently wondering whether all those brown fellows and yellow termagants are really men and women.”³¹ Besides the stuffed animals—an interest related to the townspeople’s love for menageries according to Martineau, what seemed to attract the visitor was the human tableaux, described by the French journalist Alphonse Esquiros as “ethnology in action”.³² In Martineau’s words, “The rustic, accustomed to live among the dull or the genteel, is profoundly struck by the passionate countenances of the savages who are at war or hunting; and, truly, some of them are thrilling enough to visitors who have read voyages and travels all their lives.”³³

Martineau nevertheless concluded her enquiry by the sad realization that “[the] most prominent impression on ordinary visitors [was] of eating and drinking, from the large and conspicuous space devoted to that sort of pursuit.”³⁴ This would have been helped by the location of the Refreshment Court right at the entrance of the Palace in the south wing, just before the Court of Natural History (Fig. 2). Despite several official guides advising

the visitor to start his visit in the middle of the Palace and visit the Court of Natural History after the Pompeian Court and before the courts of industrial productions, visitors tended to see Latham's Department just after having gone through the refreshment court. One of the shareholders, Samuel Sotheby complained that, when entering the Palace, the visitors, instead of contemplating its "GRANDNESS AND BEAUTY", "[found] themselves hustled together, and [saw] nothing before them but eating and drinking".³⁵ Martineau noticed that this problem "[was] understood to have been the subject of remark by the Queen, and others whose opinions are law to the managers; and alterations "[were] decreed". One proposal was that "the provision-counters should be in the gallery, where they would be out of sight, and where they would bring plenty of observation and custom to the exhibitors' stall by the way."³⁶ Food and drinks were also concerns for religious campaigners such as the temperance movement of the Teetotalers who, after trying in vain to ban alcohol from the premises, tried to forbid the opening of the Palace on Sundays.



CRYSTAL PALACE—SOME VARIETIES OF THE HUMAN RACE.

Figure 5. "Some Varieties of the Human Race," *Punch*, July 8, 1854.

The location of the natives next to the refreshment area gave way to *Punch's* humorous caricature (Fig. 5) and Eastlake's comment that "the ground these groups [of "natives"] occupy [was] most unfortunately chosen", as the "kings of the Saxon heptarchy, tapestries from Raphael's cartoons, and restaurant tables crowded with guests, assimilate[d] strangely with painted savages".³⁷

Ironically enough, the Court of Natural History came under attack for the very motive it was itself advocating: that of human dignity. Referring to "what can only be designated as stuffed natives", a shocked Eastlake claimed that "there [was] a sort of moral cannibalism in the serving up of such food for mere curiosity and amusement".³⁸ This idea found an echo in George Rose's lower-middle-brow monologue, *Mrs Brown at the Crystal Palace* (1875):

Talk of savidges, it give me sich a turn the first time as I went to the Cristshul Pallis, to see them New Zealands a-standin' there with a camel all stuffed together, as, is werry well for a pet dog or animal, but didn't ought to be allowed in 'uman beins, as ave their feelins, like ourselves, tho' they may be black, as is no doubt a purwision of natur'[...] 'cos in course their 'abits ain't clean.³⁹

Esquiros was equally disappointed, despite what was an “excellent” “intention”: “most of the human masks [were] true to life; the various animals’ skins [had been] well prepared, but the group remained small, and the details themselves sometimes seemed childish or ridiculous”.⁴⁰ Despite acknowledging that the handbook on ethnology was “the best of all handbooks for the Crystal Palace,” Eastlake dismissed Conolly’s claim that the three-dimensional representation was educational:

It is true that as regards the real abject misery of savage life, seeing may be the only believing; but what good is gained by such conviction? The missionary will not be prompted to his holy work by such groups as these – the educated spectator turns from them in pain, while, for such as make ethnology their study, the purpose would be better answered by removing these figures to some unfrequented part of the upper galleries, with their names ticketed on their heads, and their weapons and implements piled at their sides.⁴¹

Eastlake’s was just one opinion among others, and newspapers such as the *Lady’s Newspaper*—the first newspaper for women—did praise the Court as “nearly perfect,” its collection being “a means of education such as no other country in the whole world has yet produced”.⁴² Likewise, Benjamin Delessert would admire the “perfect exactitude” of the models, which allowed the visitors to see “the spectacle of the entire earth unfolding before [their] eyes”.⁴³ Furthermore, as Jan R. Piggott points out, the general view that the Crystal Palace experienced a decline “into the seedy and vulgar” after 1854 appears to be mistaken, and interesting features were added by the managers, until the building’s destruction by fire in 1936.⁴⁴ As time went by, however, the initial educational purpose of the exhibition seemed to have been lost, at least partially, as its most popular attractions turned out to be public concerts and entertainments such as the feats of the acrobat Charles Blondin (1824-1897) who, after having crossed the Niagara Falls in 1859, walked on a tightrope (on which he cooked himself an omelet!) across the central transept of the Palace in 1861. According to *Punch*, this was proof of the Palace’s educational failings, as the newspaper wrote the same year in a poem entitled “The ‘Gents’ Avenged”:

[...] They thought, poor souls! To draw the town,
 By their condensed zoo- and ethnology,
 Savages set in buff and brown,
 High art, and miniature geology,
 And courts and founts, and trees that crown
 With beauty Sydenham’s swelling down –
 They owe the public an apology!

To their appeal the crowd was dumb,
 The share-list soon revealed the blunder;
 Of comfort ’twill not add a crumb
 Against JOHN BULL’s bad taste to thunder.
 Best put up FLEWMORE or TOM THUMB,
 Or BLONDIN: if the public come,
 Ask not *cui bono?* – sack the plunder.”⁴⁵

Ethnology was nevertheless present in later world's fairs, with various educational pretensions and moral standards. The curiosity for human diversity soon became institutionalized in international exhibitions when alongside "extramural entertainment that included 'exotic' peoples" came "official 'living exhibits' organized, funded, and managed by the exposition companies", starting at the 1883 Amsterdam Colonial Exposition.⁴⁶ Latham's legacy was upheld to a degree in the twentieth century with the Exhibition "Races of Mankind," organized by the Field Museum in 1933, to compete with Chicago's "Century of Progress" World's Fair held next door. The artist Malvina Hoffman (1885-1966) did not sculpt the hundred models in plaster (with real hair and glass eyes), as she was asked to do, but instead convinced the museum to allow her to work in bronze.⁴⁷ She had travelled around the world for one year to look for models, which she magnificently represented in life-like poses. Whereas the Crystal Palace's casts were destroyed in a fire in 1866, Hoffman's ethnographical sculptures are still visible in the Field Museum, where they are scattered around the upper gallery. That is the place to which Elizabeth Eastlake would have relegated their precursors, with the difference that Hoffman's sculptures are still celebrated as works of art, isolated human subjects represented in a noble material. They were attempts at representing human diversity for the mass public—with the various degrees of imaginary construction implied in the process—in an age where televisual documentaries were not yet there to do the job.

¹Mark Twain, *The Innocents Abroad, or, The new Pilgrim's Progress* (Hartford, Conn.: American Pub. Co., 1869), 124.

²Sadiah Qureshi, *Peoples on Parade: Exhibitions, Empire, and Anthropology in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 236.

³John Ruskin, "The Opening of the Crystal Palace," in *On the Old Road: a collection of miscellaneous essays, pamphlets, etc., etc. published 1834-1885* (Sunnyside, Orpington, Kent: G. Allen, 1885), 349-350.

⁴Ruskin, "The Opening of the Crystal Palace," 253.

⁵Sadiah Qureshi's article "Robert Gordon Latham, Displayed People, and the Natural History of Race, 1854-1866," *The Historical Journal*, March 2011, 143-166 was very useful in the writing of this article.

⁶Robert G. Latham, and Edward Forbes, *The Natural History Department of the Palace Described* (London: Bradbury & Evans, 1854), 5.

⁷Qureshi, "Robert Gordon Latham," 149.

⁸John Conolly, *The Ethnological Exhibitions of London* (London: John Churchill, 1855), 39.

⁹Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), 31.

¹⁰Samuel Phillips, *Guide to the Crystal Palace and park* (London: Bradbury & Evans, 1854), 103.

¹¹"Monogenistic" refers to the belief in the common origin of all human "races". See George Stocking Jr, *Victorian Anthropology* (New York: Free Press, 1991).

- ¹² See Alison Twells, *The Civilizing Mission and the English Middle Class, 1792-1850: The 'Heathen' at Home and Overseas* (Basingstoke: Pallgrave Macmillan), 2009.
- ¹³ "The Model Court," *Punch*, November 18, 1854.
- ¹⁴ Robert Douglas-Fairhurst, "Introduction," in *London Labour and the London Poor. A Selected Edition*, written by Henry Mayhew (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), xxxix quoting Henry Mayhew in the same edition, 3.
- ¹⁵ Qureshi, *Peoples on Parade*, 18, quoting Henry Mayhew, *London Labour and the London Poor*. 4 vols (London: Griffin, Bohn, 1861-1862) 1: 2.
- ¹⁶ Qureshi, *Peoples on Parade*, 28.
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IMAGE CREDITS

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1.2.

Displaying Cultural History: The Smithsonian Institution and the World's Fairs

Kathleen Curran

Of all displays exhibited at World's Fairs, some of the most iconic centered on habitat or environmental displays that presented groups of figures—live or fake—performing tasks or reenacting historical tableaux. This essay explores the Smithsonian Institution's pivotal role in American world's fairs generally and how that august institution played a key role in these environmental displays. My focus will be on George Brown Goode, who rose through the ranks at the Smithsonian's United States National Museum (now the Arts and Industries Building) from head Curator (1877) to Assistant Director (1881) to Assistant Secretary (1887–1896). Brown Goode (as he was then known) was also a scientist, a pioneering historian of science, and a museum philosopher.¹ In all these capacities, Goode made a lasting impact on the United States National Museum (USNM) and its role in the nineteenth-century national and world's fairs. Goode, along with his colleague Otis Tufton Mason, desired that the Smithsonian's National Museum represent nothing less than the summa of human production, a cultural history writ large. His contributions culminated in the 1893 World's Columbian Exhibition, the classification system of which he drafted, after having devised a similar classification for the USNM. In Chicago, the environmental or "cultural history" display was the chief vehicle for the adaptation of Goode's vision.

CULTURAL HISTORY AND THE UNITED STATES NATIONAL MUSEUM

In 1906, Assistant Curator Walter Hough recollected:

At a psychological moment, in the notable year of 1873, there appeared an account of the Leipzig Museum of Ethnology by Dr. Gustav Klemm, containing his classification of the science in which the history of culture was set forth. . . . The introduction of the *Culturgeschichte* to American students was epochal, and must be taken as the initial point of departure for scientific ethnology in this country.²

Hough's recollections, along with documents entitled "Culturehistory in the National Museum," drafted by Otis Tufton Mason, the Curator of Ethnology, allow one to reconstruct the impact of cultural history on the USNM during its founding years.³

Gustav Klemm (1802–1867) was a notable figure in his day.⁴ As Secretary of the Royal Saxon Library in Dresden, he began assembling, in the 1830s, objects (mainly archaeological in nature) which he considered evidence of the history of human culture. The Klemm collection later formed the nucleus of Leipzig’s Museum of Ethnology (now the Museum für Völkerkunde), which opened in 1874. Hearing of the event, Joseph Henry, the Smithsonian’s first Secretary, requested that Otis Mason report on the Leipzig Museum for the Smithsonian’s annual report.⁵ Mason was also familiar with Klemm’s ten-volume *Allgemeine Cultur-Geschichte der Menschheit nach den besten Quellen bearbeitet* (*General Cultural History of Mankind Based on the Best Sources*), published between 1843 and 1852. Both the Smithsonian report and the monumental book elucidated Klemm’s theory of cultural history, a theory so ambitious that it later proved irresistible to Goode, when he arrived at the Smithsonian in 1877.

Klemm’s *Cultural History* was centered on theories of evolution and race. He believed in the single origin of the human race (monogenesis), which, he argued, developed gradually, in three stages, from a condition of savagery to semi-civilization to a state of enlightenment and separation into organized communities. He divided the earth’s peoples into passive races (the American aborigines) or active races (Aztecs, Mexicans, Caucasians). Mason explained that Klemm’s method was to examine the successive stages of culture among different tribes of ancient and modern times.⁶ What was distinctive about Klemm’s theories, though, was that his racial taxonomies did not so much depend on physical traits as they did on social conditions (family life, nourishment, tools for fire and work, clothing, dwellings), as well as higher pursuits (landscaping, science, fine arts, literature, transportation), all of which he considered “cultural history.” Indeed, most of Klemm’s *Cultural History* is absorbed with the myriad details of his categories, to the point that his overarching theory of race is nearly lost.

In Dresden, Klemm displayed his collections, which consisted mainly of pre-historic implements, in a *typological* manner; that is, one type of object was chosen to demonstrate a sequence of development in technology. Working tools like clubs, knives, spears, bow and arrows, needles, he believed, accompanied man throughout all three stages of culture from savagery to modern advances in machine production.⁷ More ambitiously, Klemm even envisioned and wrote about a “Museum for the Cultural History of Mankind,” which would be more inclusive than his pre-historic displays and reflect the more elaborate taxonomies laid out in the *Cultural History*.⁸ In other words, one could view the cultural history of humanity through a typological display of mankind’s material possessions.

Klemm’s cultural history was thus unique for its time in that it combined a theory of race, a suggestion for a new museum type, a classificatory framework for both, and a strategy for museum installation. Otis Mason and George Brown Goode eagerly accepted and adopted Klemm’s comprehensive definition of cultural history, as well as his classification system and installation practices, and retooled them for implementation at the USNM. When it opened in 1881, Goode explained that

the general idea of the new classification [of the USNM] is that the collections should form a museum of anthropology, the word ‘anthropology’ being applied in it[s] most comprehensive sense. It should exhibit the physical characteristics, the history, the manners, past and present, of all peoples, civilized and savage, and should illustrate human culture and industry in all their phases.⁹

He and Mason declared that the National Museum would contain everything that had a name.¹⁰ For the two men, cultural history bridged the gap between art and science—and provided a mechanism for thinking outside the museum box toward the creation of a new museum type: a national museum of cultural history.

When the installations of the USNM were planned, a Museum Committee announced that the installations would be technological (that is, typological) rather than geographical in character, arguing that that arrangement was best suited for the serious student as well as the curious general visitor.¹¹ Goode’s and Mason’s continued preference for a typological/developmental method of installation was rooted in Klemm and in the writings of the English anthropologist, Augustus Henry Lane Fox. Lane Fox (who adopted the name Pitt Rivers in 1880) pioneered the “evolutionary” principle of organization in museums of science in England. Differing from the usual practice of arranging archaeological and ethnographic materials by place of origin, Pitt Rivers arranged his extensive collections according to the principle of the “development of one technological form from another by small gradations.”¹² Goode and Mason developed a version of Klemm’s and Pitt Rivers’ evolutionary displays which they called the “synoptic” method. It was the National Museum’s most characteristic exhibition style and continued to be employed at the Smithsonian well into the 1920s.¹³

The inauguration of the synoptic display at a national exposition was at the Ohio Valley Centennial Exhibition, held in Cincinnati in 1888 (see Fig. 1). Curator J. Elfreth Watkins described the Smithsonian’s exhibit thus:

In a small alcove . . . there are exhibited several series of models, photographs, and drawings to illustrate the successive stages in the development of transportation, from the aboriginal times—when the Indian in his birch-bark canoe, and the squaw carrying her burthen in a basket, were the chief means of conveyance upon water and on land—to the present era of the ocean steamship, the locomotive, and the railway. . . . [T]his was the first attempt in the history of expositions, to present an object lesson which shall tell the story of the development, step by step, of the great systems of transportation that have exercised such a potent influence in accelerating the prosperous growth of the nation and in aiding the progress of our civilization.¹⁴



Figure 1.

Alcoves lined with maps, photographs, and drawings took the viewer through a synoptic history of transportation, beginning with apache squaws carrying their papooses; animal transportation; Ohio flat-boats, wagons, etc. to the invention of the American and English locomotive. The University of Christiania in Norway sent, for example, a figure of a Laplander and reindeer, with sledge (Fig 1.). At the close of the Cincinnati exhibition, several of the exhibits found permanent place in the Smithsonian's East Hall. They included the Apache squaw, the steamboat "Orleans," a model of John Steven's experimental locomotive, and the Laplander and reindeer. What is evident here is the close relationship between display strategies at the national and world's fairs, and museums. American art museums were often influenced by the display tactics adopted at world's fairs. Tony Bennett and others have called this relationship the "exhibitionary complex," referring to the visual and theoretical similarity of approach to the presentation of goods shared by world's fairs, museums, and even department stores.¹⁵

Popular success notwithstanding, the evolutionary displays, especially those dealing with the American aborigines, caused deep consternation to Franz Boas, who changed the character of American anthropology more than any other individual.¹⁶ When Boas visited Washington in the winter of 1884, he was distressed to see the Eskimo artifacts exhibited primarily according to implement types instead of by tribes. An important debate between him and Mason ensued in the pages of *Science* magazine.¹⁷

The extent to which Boas' stinging criticism may have steered the Smithsonian toward habitat exhibits, especially in the form of "life groups" or "lay figures" representing distinct tribes, has been examined by Ira Jacknis.¹⁸ But one other event certainly altered Mason's thinking about habitat display: an epochal journey in 1889 to see the Universal Exposition in Paris. There, Mason witnessed the history of human habitation exhibit on the Champs de Mars, where he saw twenty-three full-scale houses, replete with furniture and life-size figures, that recreated the history of man's dwelling patterns from pre-historic times to the present.¹⁹ Refreshed by Europe, Mason set to work. He wrote in September of 1890 that a "fresh start was made in the preparation of life-size lay figures of aboriginal people."²⁰ A missionary (Mr. Heidi Chatelain) had brought back with him from Africa a native Angolan named Jeremiah whom the Museum used as a model to make a plaster figure for the "ethnic series." They began preparation for the Chicago World's Fair, where the life groups made their spectacular debut. The exhibits included life-size figures of Native American tribes in glass vitrines performing characteristic chores, such as one showing Navaho women weaving blankets.

Mason proclaimed his ambitions for the life groups:

to show at Chicago, as accurately as possible the aboriginal life of North America at the time the natives were first visited by the Whites and before they were changed by contact with our civilization. Such an exhibit has never been attempted for any continent before because the means were not at hand to carry it out.²¹

The display, Mason said, "would enable the spectator to envision the North American Continent as it appeared to the first explorers. It would be a great historical and ethnographical exhibit."²² Curtis Hinsley has noted that Mason's sixteen "families" were taken from John Wesley Powell's 1891 linguistic map recording fifty-seven stocks of Native Americans.²³

After the Chicago World's Fair, the life groups were returned to Washington, where they were placed in the USNM's lecture hall, surrounded by the Museum's impressive collection of George Catlin's watercolors of Native American tribes and Powell's 1891 linguistic map (Fig. 2).



Figure 2.

CONCLUSION: CULTURAL HISTORY AND THE WORLD'S COLUMBIAN EXPOSITION

The Smithsonian Institution's life groups were not the only manifestation of Goode's and Mason's preoccupation with cultural history. Indeed, cultural history, which had been adopted piecemeal in earlier state and world's fairs as a display tactic by the Smithsonian, now served as the framework for Chicago's entire classification system.

Goode's ambitions for the Chicago world's fair were evident in his "First Draft of a System of Classification for the World's Columbian Exposition," which he submitted to Thomas W. Palmer, the President of the World's Columbian Commission.²⁴ This extraordinary document is of seminal importance for the ultimate framework and appearance of America's greatest fair, one that drew one out of every three Americans and caught the attention of the world at large.

Goode assured Palmer that his first draft would cause some consternation with certain groups, especially representatives of manufacturing or commercial interests, who would desire that exhibits in which they were interested be kept together. "The textile men, for instance, may wish to have felt-hats exhibited with other articles of felt, rather than in the department of costume." Goode, instead, emphasized the visitor over crass commercialism. The exhibits must attract the common man and "*by means of careful installation and labeling . . . each object [must] teach [them] some useful lesson [his emphasis].*"²⁵

In the draft's strongest statement, Goode's own aspirations emerged.

If I understand rightly the spirit of the proposed exhibition, it is to show the history of our Continent since its European occupation and its influence upon the history of the world. It is to . . . be, in fact, *An Illustrated Encyclopedia of Civilization*: It is to be so generous in its scope that *in its pictorial and literary remains will be preserved the best record of human culture in the last decade of the Nineteenth Century* [his emphasis]. If such is to be the character of the undertaking, it will be necessary to depart very largely from the traditional methods of previous exhibitions, which have usually been pre-eminently industrial.²⁶

Historical and educational ideas now dominated world's fairs and were "the most in keeping with the spirit of America at the present time."²⁷

Goode did not want Chicago to be "merely a show, a fair, or a colossal shop," but instead "an exposition of knowledge, illustrated by the material objects shown."²⁸ Furthermore, it should "teach the world, what a young republic, with all the crudeness of youth, but heir to the experience of the ages, has done in its brief past, is doing in the present, and hopes to do in the greater future for its people and for mankind."²⁹ Cultural history paved that way for Goode.

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²Walter Hough, National Anthropological Archives (NAA), "Historical Sketch of the Division of Ethnology," ms. 4787 (1906), 33-4.

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⁷Gustav Klemm, *Die Werkzeuge und Waffen: Ihre Entstehung und Ausbildung* (Sondershausen: Verlag von G. Reuse, 1858), 3.

⁸Gustav Klemm, *Fantasie über ein Museum für die Culturgeschichte der Menschheit* (Dresden: B. G. Teubner, 1843).

⁹Goode, "Report of the Assistant Director of the United States National Museum, for the Year 1881," *Annual Report of the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution Showing the Operations, Expenditures, and Condition of the Institution for the Year 1881* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1883), 89.

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¹⁴J. Elfreth Watkins, "Contributions of the Department of Transportation and Engineering to the Ohio Valley Centennial Exhibition," *Proceedings USNM, Vol. XI.—Appendix, Smithsonian Institution*. USNM. No. 45.. See also Smithsonian Institution Archives (SIA), Record Unit 158, Box 2, folder 16, Curators' Annual Reports, 1881–1964, Section of Technological Collections, 1888-89, J. Elfreth Watkins, "Report on the Section of Transportation and Engineering in the USNM, 1889," 1.

¹⁵Tony Bennett, "The Exhibitionary Complex," *New Formations* 4 (1988), 73–102. See also Bruno Giberti, *Designing the Centennial: A History of the 1876 International Exhibition in Philadelphia* (Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 2002), 175-82; Neil Harris, "Museums, Merchandising, and Popular Taste," in Ian M. G. Quimby, ed., *Material Culture and the Study of American Life* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., Inc., 1978), 140-74; Russell Lewis, "Everything Under One Roof: World's Fairs and Department Stores in Paris and Chicago," *Chicago History* 13, no. 3 (Fall 1983), 28-47.

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¹⁷See Stocking, *Shaping*, 1-13; Hinsley, 98-113; Ira Jacknis, "Franz Boas and Exhibits: On the Limitations of the Museum Method of Anthropology," in Stocking, ed., *Objects and Others*, 75-111; Lubar and Kendrick, 126-35.

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¹⁹SIA, Record Unit 158, USNM, Curators' Annual Reports, 1881–1964, Box 3, folder 11, Otis Mason, "Report of the Department of Ethnology in the U. S. National Museum, 1891," 1890-91, 3.

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²¹*Ibid.*

²²SIA, Record Unit 158, USNM, Curators' Annual Reports, 1881–1964, Box 3, folder 11, Otis Mason, "Report of the Department of Ethnology," 11.

²³Hinsley, 110.

²⁴George Brown Goode, *First Draft of a System of Classification for the World's Columbian Exposition* (Chicago: Privately printed for the World's Columbian Commission, 1890).

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²⁶Goode, xi.

²⁷Goode, xiii.

²⁸Goode, xv.

²⁹Goode, xv.

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1.3.

Living Authenticity: The World's Fair and the Zoo

Aaron Santesso

The architect Hermann Schwarzmann was sent from Philadelphia to Europe in 1873, on a trip with two purposes: to study the World's Fair in Vienna, and to report on European zoos. Upon his return, Schwarzmann designed the Philadelphia Zoo in 1874, and then the Centennial Exhibition there in 1876.¹ It was not a particularly unusual combination. The Barcelona Zoo was founded after the Universal Exhibition of 1888, and took over many of the exhibition's buildings. The St. Louis Zoo had its origins at the 1904 Fair: the Flight Cage built for the Fair still stands at the zoo. The San Diego Zoo grew out of the 1915 Panama-California Exhibition. The Zoo de Vincennes in Paris developed out of the temporary zoo designed on the site for the Paris exhibition of 1931. World's Fairs in London, Paris, Amsterdam, New York, and many others cooperated with local zoos. The histories of the World's Fair and the zoo are deeply intertwined.

Yet for most scholars, the entire history of this institutional interaction centers on two exhibits: Ota Benga and the Dahomey Village. The story of Ota Benga, the Congolese pygmy tribesman displayed at the St. Louis World's Fair in 1904, and his subsequent relocation to the Monkey House at the Bronx Zoo in 1906, is now well known, and a staple in academic criticism. The notorious Dahomey Village exhibit (at the 1893 Columbian Exhibition in Chicago) is only slightly less famous, and its racialized display ("thirty native houses [with] a population of sixty-nine people, twenty-one of them being Amazon warriors") stands at the head of the long, sad list of insensitive exhibits at World's Fairs. To such exhibits a great deal of academic attention has been devoted – though it is fair to say the conclusions drawn have not varied much. Foucauldian critics have repeatedly confirmed that such exhibits were about "power;" postcolonialists see them as part of the imperial project; and others have repeatedly reiterated that the Village was intended to "convince white fairgoers of their racial superiority," "reify their sense of whiteness," or "enforce popular racial attitudes" as well as the inferiority of "the non-white world."² There is no disputing that the discourse surrounding the village was deeply racist by our standards – indeed, even by the standards of the time. It is indefensible. And yet simply to denounce the exhibit (as "having no other purpose than exoticism," etc.) is to miss the story of why such exhibits appeared and persisted, and can give rise to misleading and inaccurate critical accounts.³ To contextualize the Village and like exhibits is not to excuse them.

THE DESIRE FOR AUTHENTICITY

Therefore let us say that the Dahomey Village, however clear its links to discourses of race and power and imperialism, is also the result of another conversation, about authenticity. The rise of the World's Fair was fueled in part by an enormous, society-wide questioning of the nature of reality and artificiality at the beginning of what Walter Benjamin would later recognize as "the age of mechanical reproduction." The second half of the nineteenth century was obsessed with simulacra and artificial replication, as we see in the curios they produced (Christian Bailly has called the last decades of the century "the golden age of automata"), the buildings they built (such as the pseudo-medieval castles of the Rhine valley of the same period), and even the food they ate (the first artificial flavors, of almonds and vanilla, were produced in mid-century). The energetic fascination with new possibilities for simulation is reflected in the exhibitions of the age—and may indeed have been the motivation behind them. The Crystal Palace itself was a kind of man-made ecosystem, inspiring later buildings such as the Machinery Hall at the Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia in 1876, which housed the Corliss Steam Engine, a 1400 horsepower engine that seemed to many to simulate, as well as replace, the life and energy of the human laborer (William Dean Howells described it as "life like," and a "giant [...] athlete"). Many visitors were just as impressed by the first public demonstration, in the same Hall, of an invention that had just received its patent: the telephone.⁴ Thus, disembodied labor and disembodied voices were all made available in Brobdingnagian buildings constructed of prefabricated parts and assembled in a few months. Natural, biological life seemed to have no place at these Fairs - or indeed in the modern world around them: "It is [...] in these things of iron and steel that the national genius most freely speaks" as Howells put it.

For some critics, the place of human culture and "real life" at these early World's Fairs seemed unclear. Dostoevsky saw the Crystal Palace as symbolic of a society "all ready-made and computed with mathematical exactitude." It was an overpowering, "terrifying" building that "can never be destroyed" and which thus serves as "the ultimate truth" and "silences" mere humans. It made visitors "numb" and "obedient"; it forces them to "succumb" and "bow down to fact."⁵ Similarly, Hippolyte Taine found it "monstrous," a monument "to English power." He described it as filled with...

"...plaster facsimiles of all the Grecian and Roman statues scattered over Europe...of a reproduction of a Pompeian house; of a reproduction of the Alhambra. The ornaments of the Alhambra have been molded, and these molds are preserved in an adjoining room as proofs of authenticity. In order to omit nothing, copies have been made of the most notable Italian paintings."

At least in ancient Rome, Taine concluded, the displays of wealth were real ("the monsters, whether rhinoceroses or lions, were perfectly alive and tore human beings to pieces"); in London, everything was artificial ("here, the statues are made of plaster and the monsters of goldbeater's skin").⁶ Unlike Benjamin, with his ambivalent optimism about the loss of the "aura" of authenticity, many in the late nineteenth century were asking what the point was

of “mathematically exact” technology, if all it could produce (or mechanically reproduce) was “plaster facsimiles.”

It is, in this context, interesting to consider the fate of the Chinese exhibit at the Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia. The exhibit was unfinished on opening day, which created an unexpected thrill, as throngs gathered to watch the Chinese carpenters, in their native costumes, rush to finish their work. Edward Bruce, writing at the time, shrewdly suggested that the Chinese had stumbled upon something here: the incomplete nature of the exhibit was “really an advantage” since “visitors could see at once the workmen and their works.”⁷ There, suddenly, was the aura of authenticity, supplied by living bodies. The *New York Tribune* noted that “The exhibits which are accompanied by exhibitors of another race, at once recognizable in features or dress, have a double attraction to the crowd.”⁸ It was a phenomenon which did not escape future Fair planners: Harlow Higinbotham, the president of the 1893 Exhibition in Chicago, suggested in his official report that “the eye and mind need relief” from the formal and mathematically exact Court of Honor.⁹ The “opportunity” for that relief was the impetus behind the Midway Plaisance, which balanced the technologically-advanced, neoclassical perfection of the main site with the human, imperfect, and primitive. And what could be less artificial (the White City, after all, was ultimately a kind of mock-up, built in plaster and designed to be temporary) than “Living Indian exhibits” or “natives of Dahomey engaged in native pursuits.” No giant steam engines here. Indeed, the Columbian Exhibition obsessively sought out ways to artificially replicate the natural:

The [Cliff Dwellers] exhibit is housed, so to speak, in the largest artificial mountain ever constructed...It is an exact reproduction of Battle Rock in the MacElmo valley, Colorado. The representation is exceedingly realistic, having the appearance of solid rock, though constructed of timbers, staff, iron and stone, painted and sanded so as to resemble nature. Over all is a growth of cacti, yucca, cedar and other trees...many of the finest cliff dwellings, on a scale of one-tenth, and with marvelous exactitude, are reproduced. In the relic room are shown some thousands of examples of the weapons, cooking utensils, implements and mummified remains of this pre-historic people. Outside there are trails for the pack animals and visitors, leading to Point Lookout, and in addition to this a herd of some forty wild animals, elk, blacktail deer, moose and Rocky Mountain sheep are exhibited to add realism to the scene.¹⁰

For the next half century or so, world’s fairs rarely failed to include “realistic” ethnological exhibits, and especially “exotic” humans on display, including extensive “authentic” displays in the colonial exhibitions of Amsterdam in 1883, Paris in 1900, and St. Louis in 1904, where Ota Benga had plenty of company, from Philippine tribesmen to Inuit from northern Canada.¹¹ Thus the Dahomey village was not unique, or isolated, but rather can be seen as one entry in an ongoing project, part of a vast and persistent attempt to counter the rise of the artificial. Nor, for all its racism, was it inspired solely by anti-African-American sentiment, originating as it did from Europe, and surrounded as it was on the Midway by various other “exotic” villages. Indeed, at the time, there was just as much interest in the

“East Indian” and “Lapland” villages, in the mock-ups of Egyptian temples and street scenes, and in the displays of living Inuit peoples. Perhaps more to the point: all of these villages—Ceylonese, Laplander, Egyptian, Eskimo, African—became mainstays of World’s Fairs until the 1930s. Many incorporated native wildlife (the Javanese village had an orangutan). We may ask, then, not just “why display cultures in this way?” (a question that Dean MacCannell and others have asked of the “staged authenticity” of modern tourism) but “why display these cultures in particular?”¹² Why were animal-enhanced Ceylonese, Laplander, and Inuit villages regular entries at world’s fairs?

THE ORIGINS OF THE “LIVING VILLAGE”: BODINUS AND HAGENBECK

The answer lies, I suggest, in the zoo, the other institution most closely engaged in questions about “realistic” display of living beings, and in particular in the work of two nineteenth-century German zoo directors who pioneered new, “authentic” display philosophies: Heinrich Bodinus and Carl Hagenbeck. Bodinus was the original director of the Cologne Zoo, before moving to the same position at the Berlin Zoo, where he became a dominant figure during a period when zoos began to experiment with the idea that the sterility and emptiness of artificial environments could be offset, not just by the introduction of living elements, but by framing those living elements against an accurately-rendered exotic background. To put it another way: during a period when many zoo designers were embracing the Crystal Palace model—modern, clean, open, dominated by glass and iron—another group of architects turned instead to the “exotic village” model, positing, somewhat oddly from a modern perspective, that animals would benefit from being displayed within accurate simulacra of buildings from their native regions—or even different regions, so long as they were also exotic. Inspired by the “Egyptian Court” at the Crystal Palace Exhibition, the Antwerp zoo built a stunningly detailed Egyptian temple (1856) to house its elephants and giraffes, and later (in 1861) an “Oriental” antelope house. These buildings lit a fire under other zoo directors, led by Bodinus, first at the Cologne Zoo (where he commissioned a Giraffe and Antelope House in Moorish style in 1863), and then at the Berlin Zoo, where he and his successors Maximilian Schmidt and Ludwig Heck set about constructing a series of “exotic” animal houses which remain famous today. The list includes the antelope house in the form of a mosque (1871); the “Elephant pagoda,” an enormous replica of a Hindu temple which remains the centerpiece building of the zoo (1873); a Japanese-style building for wading birds (1897); and an Egyptian Ostrich House (1901) inspired by Antwerp, and for which scholars from the university were consulted, so that the hieroglyphics and ornamentation might be perfectly accurate. But of course the real element of authenticity was the living one, the animals inside the plaster replicas of exotic buildings instantly providing the latter with something of the quality of the originals.

Hagenbeck’s relationship to the zoo was more complex. He is commonly associated with his “Tierpark,” built in 1907 at Stellingen, near Hamburg, in which he pioneered the techniques of “barless cages” (moated enclosures) and “natural” environments (concrete mountain peaks, etc.). Before building his zoo, Hagenbeck was a globally-famous wildlife dealer and operator of both animal and “exotic” human shows. Hagenbeck now serves

as a convenient punching bag in much criticism; what little attention has been paid to his influence on World's Fairs exhibits has tended to be apologetic.¹³ But the Tierpark was indeed influential—as was his earlier career, during which he constantly experimented with “authentic” displays of life. Early on, he noticed a rise in business when he displayed certain animals—orangutans and other apes, especially—in human situations, or interacting with humans; he was also struck by the persistent interest in foreign peoples, particularly those who maintained pre-industrial ways of life. A breakthrough came in 1874, when Hagenbeck engaged a group of native Laplanders to accompany a herd of reindeer in an elaborate German display. The reaction was enthusiastic, and by the 1890s Hagenbeck had developed a series of spectacular “living panorama” exhibits—the most dazzling and popular in what had quickly become a thriving German tradition of “Volkerschau” (exotic people shows). Perhaps the most popular early offering of Hagenbeck’s was the “Northern Panorama”: against a backdrop of northern scenery and rockwork, seals and walrus swam in

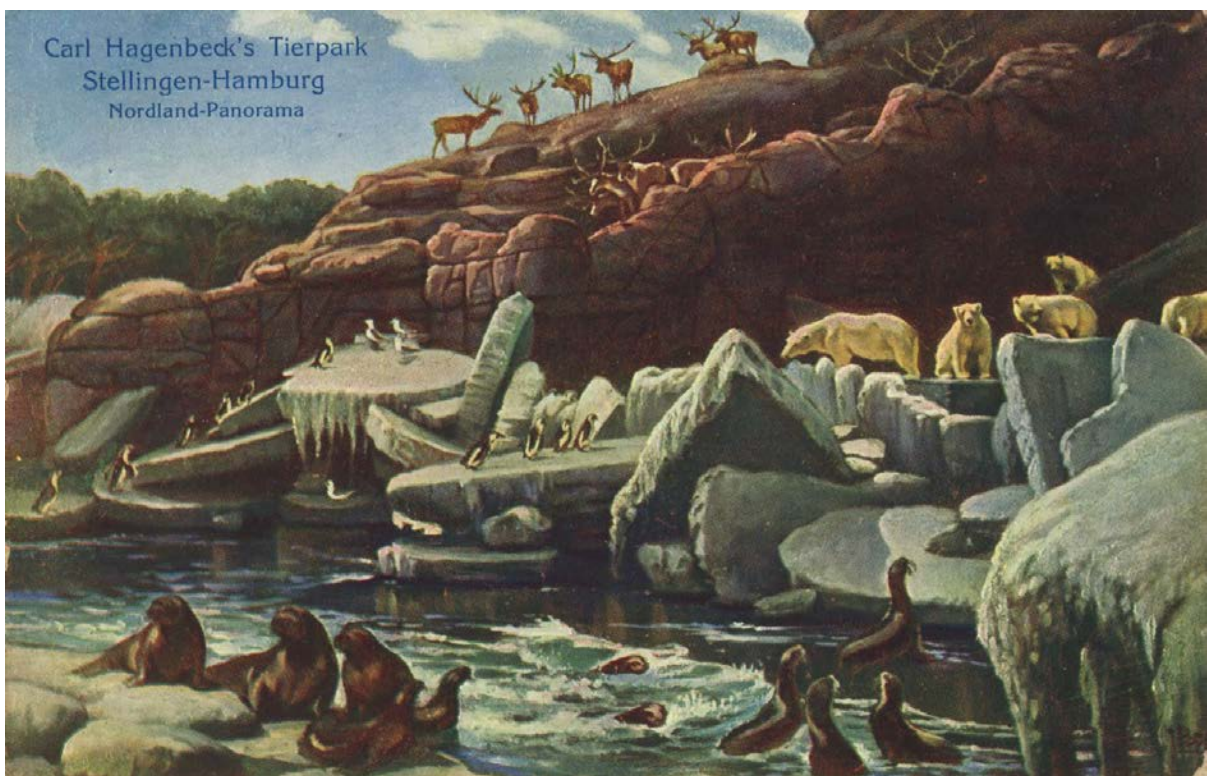


Figure 1. Tierpark/Arctic.

a pool, beyond which were reindeer, and further back (separated by a hidden moat) polar bears. The effect was that all the animals appeared to be together in one “real” northern landscape, a kind of zoological version of the “Cliff Dwellers” exhibit at the Columbian Exhibition. A number of these exhibits were eventually developed, along different regional themes: “Singhalese” [Sri Lankan], South American, African, Javanese (with orangutans), Indian. Human beings were regularly incorporated: for the Indian panorama, for example, “a whole Indian city is reproduced and native Indians display their crafts



Figure 2: Tierpark/Indian.

and skills”.¹⁴ Hagenbeck took the exhibits on the road, calling them “The Zoological Garden of the Future.” The most high-profile stop on his tours? A site one block away from the Dahomey Village at the 1893 Columbian Exhibition Midway—a Midway that also paid testament to the influence of Hagenbeck with its Lapland Village (containing both Laplanders and reindeer), and a Javanese village that displayed an orangutan alongside “the houses of the natives.”¹⁵

Hagenbeck’s combination of detailed backdrops, realistic natural and architectural features, and animal and human elements eventually carried all before it. An 1897 newspaper reported that the display of nature:

...has been realized in striking manner by the famous animal trainer Carl Hagenbeck. The triumph of the scenic artist has been combined with three-dimensional representation, to create a most exciting open-air polar landscape, and for the first time of its kind, this panorama has been enriched with live animals moving about in complete freedom.¹⁶

It was a pioneering attempt at tourist-oriented “staged authenticity,” and it struck a nerve. By 1900, living panoramas had become a fixture at World’s Fairs: the Paris colonial exhibition and the Louisiana Purchase Exhibition in St. Louis collaborated with Hagenbeck to offer a range of such displays to an eager public.¹⁷ Benjamin, commenting on the exotic exterior architecture of “Le Tour du Monde” in Paris, “which animated a changing panoramic background with living figures in the foreground,” suggested, “The similarity of this architecture to that in zoological gardens is worth noting.” It was no coincidence:

zoos and World's Fair living panoramas had become something like business partners in this area. The Jardin Zoologique d'Acclimatation opened in 1860 in the Bois de Boulogne; by 1877, it had been transformed into "l'Acclimatation Anthropologique," a human zoo with "Nubian" and "Northern" exhibits that followed Hagenbeck's lead. The organizers of the Paris colonial fairs in 1889 and 1931 cooperated with the zoo to set up various displays, including an infamous Madagascar panorama stocked with natives.

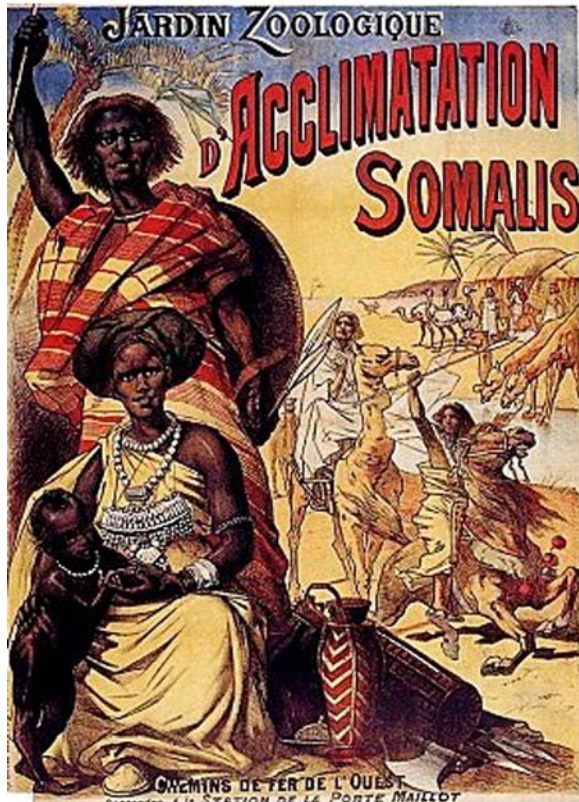


Figure 3: Jardin.

Hagenbeck died in 1914, and the first World War devastated the Hagenbeck company's American operations. Rival American wildlife showmen stepped into the breach, most notably Frank Buck. But in Europe, particularly, Hagenbeck's influence continued. The zoo at the 1931 Paris Colonial Exhibition was built along the lines of his Tierpark; enlarged and rebuilt in even more elaborately Hagenbeckian manner at the close of the exhibition, it became the permanent Paris Zoo (the Zoo de Vincennes).

The success of the 1931 zoo, and the associated villages and panoramas around it, did not go unnoticed by subsequent fair designers. Charles Dawes, who with his brother Rufus was responsible for planning the Chicago Exposition of 1933, suggested

that the Paris "Colonial Exposition drew 30 million people, largely because of what might be termed exotic features."¹⁸ And so, Chicago in 1933 duly offered up an African village, a Native American village, a "replica Chinese village," a Moroccan village, and so on. Many of these included animal elements.¹⁹ And, in an echo of 1893, one of the hits of the fair was Frank Buck's Jungle Camp, in which a simulated camp, staffed by "native assistants," showed a collection of wild animals to visitors. Hagenbeck, in a manner of speaking, had returned to Chicago.

THE FATE OF THE "LIVING VILLAGE": JOE ROHDE

As for the zoo itself, the turn to artificial naturalism was a decisive one. In 1932, John Stephen Sewell, an architect and director of exhibits for the 1933 Chicago Fair, outlined his "Project for an African Exhibit." The exhibit would revolve around an African village, beside a "Congo river," on which visitors would travel in canoes "manned by dusky natives" to see African natives living in a jungle setting. There would also be a "Plantation Café," "Dar Nuba Theatre," "pens of African jungle beasts," and an elevated walkway "on which tourists may

promenade, while they look down on the miniature African world below.”²⁰ The project, expensive and, even at that date, somewhat risky, given the history of racialized exhibits at midwestern world’s fairs, was eventually downscaled into the (still controversial) “Darkest Africa.” Yet while the original and more ambitious version of this exhibit was never built at a world’s fair, its type—the “exotic village,” combined with animal displays—found a home back where it began: in the zoo.

In 1990, the Disney “Imagineer” Joe Rohde, who had previously worked at Epcot, Disney’s pseudo-World’s Fair in Orlando, met with then-CEO Michael Eisner and proposed combining elements of Epcot with those of a zoo. The result was Disney’s Animal Kingdom, which opened in 1998, featuring a vast Hagenbeckian zoo built around the mock-African village of “Harambe.” (The Asian zone, a later expansion, features two more villages: “Anandapur” and “Serka Zong.”) From Harambe, after shopping for “authentic African art” at the Mombasa Marketplace (or the slightly more down-market “Ziwani Traders”), one may set out on the “Kilimanjaro Safaris” ride, and head out to see African animals (accompanied by a Swahili hymn on the radio); for a brief time, night safaris were offered, with an African dance troupe performing in the elephant enclosure. The park immediately became, and remains, one of the most popular in the world.

The obsession some theorists of the postmodern have with theme parks revolves around the idea of artificiality trumping authenticity, or becoming a new authenticity. Umberto Eco, in particular, suggests that Disney’s automata (including robotic animals) make the reality “found in the zoo” seem inferior.²¹ Yet the Animal Kingdom instead returns to the idea of the Chinese exhibit in Philadelphia’s Centennial Exhibition: real life invests artificiality with authenticity. And it is this model, rather than the complete artificiality praised by Baudrillard and admired by Eco, that one sees in leading zoos and animal-centered theme parks. An hour down the road from the Animal Kingdom, Busch Gardens in Tampa features not just one but several African “villages” scattered amidst its animal exhibits, along with a “Congo River Rapids” ride, and shows at the “Timbuktu Theater.” Visitors can dine at the “Zagora Café” or the plantation-style “Crown Colony Café” before setting off on an animal-spotting safari – with real, not robotic crocodiles. Elevated rides allow the opportunity to look down on the miniature African world below. The children’s play area—the “Pygmy Village”— is now closed, however.

Elsewhere in Tampa, the Lowry Park Zoo continues to develop its own African village, with thatched huts, mud walls, a “Safari Lodge,” and various tribal artifacts, drums and pottery scattered about. In Germany, where Bodinus and Hagenbeck helped pioneer the zoo-based “African Village,” such displays have occasionally attracted controversy, but almost everywhere else they have been embraced by the public and designers alike.²² From San Diego to New York, from Singapore to New Zealand, modern “African villages” abound at zoos – all of them, inevitably, described as “authentic” and “exotic,” as the equivalent to spending time “in Africa.”²³ The African Village at the Woodland Park Zoo in Seattle features a “traditional wooden Kikuyu house” and a schoolhouse where, in place of a blackboard,

visitors are afforded a view of giraffes and zebras in a savanna exhibit. The village, its designer explains, is meant to evoke “the presence of indigenous people who live near the animals we have here in this habitat.” The Living Desert Zoo in Palm Springs boasts the “African Village WaTuTu,” a “5-acre replica of a north Kenyan Village” complete with “mud-walled huts and grass-thatched roofs” alongside hyena and leopard exhibits, all of which “provides guests with an authentic and awe-inspiring African experience.” The Houston Zoo has “The African Forest,” where, past the “Twiga Terrace Restaurant” and the “Shani Market,” visitors encounter a Pygmy Village:

Upon entering the forest beyond, you will find yourself immersed in the exotic sounds and smells of the jungle leading to a Baka Pygmy Village of small, round, leaf-covered huts and a central fire pit. Whether you utilize all of this area or just the village, it’s a most exotic location for just the right sized group.²⁴

Of course, it is not enough simply to say that the Dahomey Village relocated from the World’s Fair to the zoo, although it is certainly at the zoo that the desire to retreat into an “authentically” natural and exotic zone has been capitalized upon most aggressively. But with a difference: in all of these zoological “African Villages,” the place of the tribesmen is now taken, physically, by us, the visitors. The only occupants of the mud hut, the schoolhouse, the Pygmy Village, are the zoogoers, who suddenly find they have entered the living panorama. The positions of spectator, participant, Western and exotic subject have been confounded. While analysis of the consequences (and forms of bad faith at work) goes beyond the purview of this essay, it is, perhaps, enough to say that there exists here a vision of human display and authentic existence as radical and strange as the one Hermann Schwarzmann encountered in the zoo and brought back to Philadelphia 140 years ago.

¹John Maass, *The Glorious Enterprise*, (American Life Foundation, 1973), 22.

²Robert Rydell, John Findling, and K. Pelle, *Fair America*, (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian, 2000), 39; Christopher Robert Reed, *All the World is Here!: Black Presence at White City* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2002), 152; Eric Avila, *Popular Culture in the Age of White Flight: Fear and Fantasy in Suburban Los Angeles* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 135; Anna Jackson, *EXPO: International Expositions, 1851-1900* (London: V & A Publishing, 2008), 56. An exception to the rule is Burton Benedict, who in “Rituals of Representation: Ethnic Stereotypes and Colonized Peoples at World’s Fairs” (28-61 in *Fair Representations*, ed. Rydell and Nancy E. Gwinn [Amsterdam: VU University Press 1994]), argues that displays were not just about power but also about ritual and theatricality – certain ethnic groups became traditional presences, and were presented in expected ways.

³James Burkhart Gilbert, *Perfect Cities: Chicago’s Utopias of 1893*, 111. Few studies mention that the reason that a “Dahomey” village, specifically, would have been of interest because the Second Franco-Dahomean War was raging at the time of the Fair. The 1893 exhibit, according to some recent critics “deliberately contrived” to humiliate and exclude the Chicago African-American community (e.g. Reed, 151; Lauren Rabinovitz, *For the Love of Pleasure: Women, Movies, and*

Culture in turn-of-the-century Chicago [New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1998], 60), was in fact a French import. Other errors and misstatements pop up regularly: Avila, for example, states that “the Dahomey Village stood apart, geographically...from every other national and ethnic village on the fairgrounds.” In fact, the village was located between the “Lapland Village” and the “Austrian Village.”

⁴*Reports on the Philadelphia International Exhibition of 1876* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1877), 218.

⁵*Notes from the Underground*, trans. Ralph E. Matlaw (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1960), 22; *Winter Notes on Summer Impressions*, trans. David Patterson (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1988), 37.

⁶Hippolyte Taine, *Notes on England*, trans. William F. Rae (New York: Holt & Williams, 1872), 232.

⁷Edward C. Bruce, *The Century: Its Fruits and Its Festivals, Being a History and Description of the Centennial Exhibition* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1877)

⁸Bayard Taylor, “Foreign Pavilions and Booths,” *New York Tribune* (22 August 1876). For a good discussion of the Chinese exhibits at the Centennial Exhibition, see John Rogers Haddad, *The Romance of China: Excursions to China in U.S. Culture, 1776-1876* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008).

⁹Robert Muccigrosso, *Celebrating the New World* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1993), 154.

¹⁰*Official Guide to the Columbian Exhibition* (Chicago, 1893).

¹¹The Philippine exhibit contained six villages, with 1200 people from forty tribes, from the “least civilized” to the “civilized and cultured” (Benedict 46). Contemporary accounts describe the view of “people of all climes and of varying degrees of civilisation from savage to enlightened” (David R. Francis, *The Universal Exposition of 1904* [St. Louis, 1913]; qtd. in John Allwood *The Great Exhibitions* [London: Studio Vista, 1977], 114.

¹²See MacCannell’s influential “Staged Authenticity: Arrangements of Social Space in Tourist Settings,” *American Journal of Sociology* 79 (1973): 589-603. Second reference in the same note should be formatted as follows: Ning Wang, “Rethinking Authenticity in Tourist Experience,” *Annals of Tourism Research* 26/2 (1999): 349-70.

¹³See, for example, Nigel Rothfels, who attacks what he sees as a too-positive “revisionist image” of Hagenbeck (*Savages and Beasts: The Birth of the Modern Zoo* [Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002], 185, 206). For a good, impartial rethinking of Hagenbeck, see Eric Ames, *Carl Hagenbeck’s Empire of Entertainments* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2008).

¹⁴*Zeitschrift für Ethnologie* (1898), qtd. in Erika Fischer-Lichte and Jo Riley, *The Show and the Gaze of Theatre: A European Perspective* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1997), 75.

¹⁵See Rydell, *World of Fairs* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1993), 75-76. On the Midway, Hagenbeck’s enormous assortment of animals, from sloth bears to “dwarf elephants,” to a “collection of 200 monkeys,” to the “largest collection [of parrots] ever seen,” shared quarters with his “Ethnological collection...from different parts of Africa...from New Caledonia...from British Columbia...from Greenland,” etc. (*Official catalogue of exhibits on the Midway Plaisance* (Chicago: W. B. Conkey, 1893).

¹⁶*Illustrated Times*, 1897; qtd. in Lorenz Hagenbeck, *Animals Are My Life* (London: Bodley Head, 1956).

¹⁷See Jackson, 81

¹⁸Quoted in Rydell, *World of Fairs*, 82.

¹⁹Official Guide Book of Chicago’s Century of Progress World’s Fair.

²⁰John Stephen Sewell, "Project for an African Exhibit," Records of the Century of Progress Exhibition (Chicago, 1932). Quoted in Rydell, *World of Fairs*, 84.

²¹Umberto Eco, *Travels In Hyperreality* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1986), 44.

²²The Augsburg Zoo sparked outrage when it organized an "African Village" display in 2005 (<http://www.spiegel.de/international/0,1518,359799,00.html>)

²³For "authenticity" in architecture and the sense of being "in Africa," see "An Interview with Patrick Janikowski" (<http://www.houstonzoo.org/architecture-of-africa/>).

²⁴Caroline Allen, "African village life is newest attraction at Woodland Park Zoo," *Seattle Post Intelligencer* (Thursday, May 24, 2001).

1.4.

Blanche et Noir, by Louise Faure-Favier: When France Falls in Love with Senegal at the 1889 Exposition Universelle in Paris

Fanny Robles

“And the transplantation has been so skillfully done that, on the very next day after their arrival, the Senegalese, all settled in their cabins, resumed the lives they had in Senegal, their little manual trades, their habits and even their funny ways, as if they had fallen asleep in Dakhar [sic] or Saint-Louis, only to wake up on the Esplanade des Invalides.”¹ This is how the journalist Henri Anry describes his Parisian experience of the Senegalese village for the *Livre d’Or* of the 1889 Exposition Universelle. This type of exotic encounter was no novelty in the French capital, which was then well accustomed to ethnographic displays.

HUMAN SHOWCASES IN COLONIAL FRANCE²

Anry’s use of the word “transplantation” is very telling: if native villages became a regular feature of world’s fairs after 1889,³ they originated in zoos and zoological gardens. The Jardin Zoologique d’Acclimatation in Paris—acclimatation (“acclimation” in English) being the intended goal of “transplantation”—played a central role in the institutionalization of native villages as popular entertainments. The Africans on display in native villages at the end of the nineteenth century were not the first ones to come to France: freed slaves and household servants had been in the country since the seventeenth century.⁴ Building on newspaper articles that kept the French informed of the colonial enterprise and the new imperial subjects, the exhibitions that took place at the end of the nineteenth century had the unprecedented character of mass encounters only possible in the age of mass media. If ethnological exhibitions had existed in Europe before that time, the sheer scale of the shows set during the “scramble for Africa” spoke volumes about the new imperial agenda.

When the Jardin d’Acclimatation exhibited a group of Nubians alongside African animals in 1877, the inclusion of the human element was only an afterthought.⁶ This new form of mass entertainment proved to be a crowd pleaser, however, with attendance figures increasing dramatically, from 606,979 in 1875 to 830,711 in 1877.⁷ In the first decade of the displays, which saw such different peoples as Eskimos, Fuegians, American Indians and Ceylonese brought to Paris, the Jardin could count on the official support of the Paris Anthropological Society founded in 1859. The latter’s clear bent for physical anthropology led it to see

the human showcases as an unprecedented opportunity for countless measurements. William H. Schneider identifies the Jardin's exhibition of Western Africans after 1887 as a turning point in the venue's commercial strategy. The real change occurred with the Ceylonese in 1886, when an actual show took place with dances and running competitions. Such a departure from traditional exhibitions to a more circus-like form of entertainment, together with the realization of the native's behavioral transformation on French soil, resulted in the Anthropological society severing its ties with the Jardin.⁸ West African exhibitions followed which reenacted colonial battles, staging the natives' defeats on a daily basis. Such was the case with the Ashantis in 1877 (following the third Anglo-Ashanti War of 1873-1874), the Dahomeans in 1891 (following the first Franco-Dahomean War of 1890), or the Paï-Pi-Bris from Ivory Coast in 1893 (despite their never having fought the French) (Fig. 1). The popularity of native villages soon spread to other venues in Paris, such as the Champ de Mars which exhibited Dahomeans in 1893, just before they left for the Columbian Exhibition in Chicago.



Figure 1. The Paï-Pi-Bris at the Jardin d'Acclimatation, *Le Petit Journal*, 5 August 1893.

SENEGAL AT THE 1889 EXPOSITION UNIVERSELLE

The 1889 Exposition Universelle was an occasion for the French government, then facing parliamentary opposition against colonial expansion, to showcase the Empire in the native villages on the Esplanade des Invalides. The Exposition lasted from May 5 until November 6, attracting more than 32,350,000 visitors.⁹ Lynn E. Palermo points to the architectural

hierarchy between the different colonial villages, depending on their perceived degree of “civilization”: the main alley was lined with buildings representing the North African and Asian colonies and, scattered about them, were ethnographic villages representing sub-Saharan Africans, New Caledonian “Canaques,” and Tonkinese. The main function of the native villages was that of a symbolical counterpoint to the daunting Eiffel Tower, then the tallest building in the world. Having noticed that the “primitive” Senegalese, a group of more than thirty “natives” brought to Paris by the colonial officer Commandant Noirot, slept and ate on the ground (Fig. 2), Henri Anry exclaimed: “Here are some people who wouldn’t have built the Eiffel Tower!”¹⁰



Village sénégalais, à l'Esplanade des Invalides.

Figure 2. The Senegalese Village, Charles Crespin, Livre d'Or de L'Exposition, 1889.

This did not prevent the journalist, who indulged in what Brett A. Berliner has called “ethno-eroticism,”¹¹ from praising Senegalese beauty and intelligence:

“And whether they sit or lie on the ground, the Senegalese do work, as they are an active, intelligent race, very hardworking, very nice, to tell the truth. Men are magnificent males. One can hardly dream of a more handsome type of man than one of their fellow countrymen who often comes and sits down near their village.”¹²

He even praised the skills of some of the “Sambalabé” jewelers who could well open up a shop on the boulevard after the end of the Exposition. Louis Rousselet’s *L’Exposition universelle de 1889* describes the same character, mentioning a “Samba Laobé Tiam, a vigorous clever Ouolof from Saint-Louis, who manages a workshop on the Esplanade with his brother and his young son.”¹³ The writer and journalist Louise Faure-Favier (1870-1961) had a copy of Rousselet’s book in her personal library, and had drawn a line in the margin just in front of the jeweler’s name.¹⁴ In 1927, this friend of Apollinaire’s would serialize a novel entitled *Mon oncle nègre* (“My negro uncle”), that, when it became the book *Blanche et Noir* (“White Woman and Black Man”) in 1928, had a certain “Samba Laobé Thiam” as one of its characters (Fig. 3).



Faure-Favier’s novel is narrated by Jeanne, a child who progressively discovers that her infamous grandmother Malvina Rieux gained her bad reputation at the *Exposition Universelle* in Paris in 1889. She was then a forty-year-old widow, and had left her son and daughter-in-law in their provincial town, to see the exhibition in Paris. There she met one of the participants of the Senegalese village who initiated her to African art and made her try on some jewelry. He then followed her to the Eiffel Tower’s restaurant, dressed as a Parisian. They very soon fell in love and eloped to Senegal where she eventually gave birth to their son, François Laobé-Rieux, the same year that Jeanne was born, thereby giving her what she refers to as her “negro uncle.” Malvina died some time later, on her way back to France, before she could make peace with her family. At the end of the novel Jeanne—who like Louise Faure-Favier herself, became one of the few women to travel by plane, breaking world records¹⁵—meets her uncle and flies with him, metaphorically escaping prejudices of race and gender.¹⁶

Figure 3. Samba Lawebée Thiam, jeweller, born in Saint Louis (Sénégal). One of a set of 24 anthropological photographs entitled “Village sénégalais,” which belonged to Prince Roland Bonaparte.

Blanche et Noir was written in the 1920s, after the Senegalese had proved “useful” to the French in World War One when they fought in Europe as part of the “shock troops.” Most of the soldiers went back to Senegal afterwards, leaving behind a country that was becoming

more and more interested in African culture, albeit very ambiguously. Faure-Favier herself claims in a 1928 letter that she counted “many highly cultivated Black men among [her] friends.”¹⁷ The negritude movement was then emerging, with René Maran’s *Batuala*, a book officially forbidden in the French colonies in 1928 for its very critical preface against colonial officers, winning the prestigious Goncourt Prize in 1921.¹⁸ Meanwhile ethnographic human displays were still common and included the 1922 National Colonial Exhibition in Marseilles and the 1925 “Foulahs” (Fulani) exhibition at the Jardin d’Acclimatation in Paris.¹⁹ In *Blanche et Noir*, Jeanne states that she could easily quench her curiosity for Africa in 1920 Paris: “There was, I must admit, enough to satisfy my interest. What films, what revues, what dances, expositions, exhibitions! I was an impassioned spectator of the many *spectacles nègres* in Paris.”²⁰ A reassessment of Parisian “negrophilia” seems nevertheless to have been present in *Blanche et Noir*, as François Laobé-Rieux puts it: “In 1925, the white race continues to scorn the black race and to consider it inferior [...] How many see the *nègres* of Senegal only through apelike antics of jazz bands! How many are ignorant that a black elite prides itself on an intelligent and energetic deputy, a laureate winner, talented painters, and many doctors.”²¹

Although Faure-Favier did manifest an open-mindedness that was rare enough at the time to be noted, she did not question the Empire, unlike contemporary authors such as André Gide in *Voyage au Congo* (1927). On the contrary, if women were going to help eradicate racism it was, according to her, by leading the civilizing mission, just as Malvina did in Senegal after visiting the Exposition, when she helped Samba Laobé bring peace to villages which had rebelled against French progress:²²

One day, women will again be successful mediators like Malvina Rieux [...] Women, with their greater minds and better hearts, are the real civilizers! [...] It will be enough for them to decree that the black race has the same value as the white race and that beauty resides in one as much as another, that a black brain is formed like a white brain, and that there is but one humanity.

This would have been wishful thinking in 1889, as the real Samba Laobé told a journalist:

We are humiliated [...] to be exhibited this way, in huts like savages; these straw and mud huts do not give an idea of Senegal. In Senegal [...] we have large buildings, railroad stations, railroads; we light them with electricity. The Bureau of Hygiene does not tolerate this type of hovel. Those (existing ones) that fall into disrepair are not replaced.

The journalist then goes on to notice that the Senegalese on display suffer from the lack of politeness of the French:

‘What an ape!’ ‘A monster!’
‘My heavens, he’s ugly!’
‘Where is his clock?’
We forget that these are people and not exotic animals that we are watching behind the fences.²⁴

THE VILLAGES' LEGACY: GRAPPLING WITH "IMPERIAL SPLASHES"²⁵

The Jardin d'Acclimatation made a rather loud comeback in the French press in 2011, when it was chosen as a venue to celebrate France's overseas departments and territories, eighty years after the last exhibition in the garden that featured "Cannibal Kanaks" from New Caledonia. The latter had been displayed alongside the 1931 Colonial Exhibition that took place in Vincennes, prompting the Surrealist artists to sign an appeal entitled "We won't go to the Colonial Exhibition." 2011 saw the resurrection of the old motto, slightly modified: "We won't go to the Jardin d'Acclimatation" was a call to protest against the ill-chosen setting of the 2011 celebration and the absence on the premises of any historical explanation pointing the visitor to the previous imperial human exhibitions. The organizers of the celebration justified their choice of location as a means to reassert the present in erasing the past. Even though the celebration eventually took place in the Jardin as planned, the protesters obtained justice with the establishment of a mission on the legacy of ethnographic and colonial exhibitions entrusted by the Ministry of French overseas departments and territories to the Committee for the Memory of Slavery. Meanwhile, French scholars who had put together several volumes on ethnographic human displays²⁶ organized an exhibition in Paris, at the Quai Branly Museum, entitled "The Invention of the Savage," from November 29, 2011 to June 3, 2012.²⁷ As African immigration and assimilation are at the center of the 2012 presidential campaign in France, one can only welcome this postcolonial exhibition and hope for an enlightened reenactment of the 1893 Columbian Exhibition's motto: "To See is to Know."

¹Henri Anry, "Le Village Sénégalais," in *Livre d'Or de l'Exposition*, ed. C.-L. Huard. (Paris: L. Boulanger, 1889), 278. All translations are mine unless stated otherwise.

²The expression "human showcases" is borrowed from Paul Greenhalgh's chapter heading "Chapter Four: Human Showcases," in *Ephemeral Vistas: the Expositions Universelles, Great Exhibitions and World's Fairs, 1851-1939* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), 82.

³Robert. W. Rydell, *All the World's a Fair: Visions of Empire at American International Expositions, 1876-1916* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1984), 7, 56.

⁴William H. Schneider, *An Empire for the Masses. The French Popular Image of Africa, 1870-1900* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1982), 125, after William B. Cohen, *The French Encounter with Africans: White Response to Blacks, 1530-1880* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1980), 110-113. I am particularly indebted to Schneider's Chapter 6 entitled "Africans in Paris" (125-151) for the writing of this article.

⁵See Sadiyah Qureshi, *Peoples on Parade: Exhibitions, Empire, and Anthropology in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011).

⁶Schneider, *An Empire for the Masses*, 128.

⁷Ibid., 129.

⁸See Schneider, *An Empire for the Masses*.

⁹Lynn E. Palermo, "Identity under Construction: Representing the Colonies at the Paris *Exposition Universelle* of 1889," in *The Color of Liberty: Histories of Race in France*, ed. Sue Peabody et al. (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2003), 285.

¹⁰Anry, "Le Village Sénégalais," 278.

¹¹Brett A. Berliner, *Ambivalent Desire: The Exotic Other in Jazz-Age France* (Amherst and Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2002), 4.

¹²Anry, "Le Village Sénégalais," 278.

¹³Louis Rousselet, *L'Exposition universelle de 1889*, Bibliothèque des écoles et des familles (Paris: Hachette, 1890) 146, in Roger Little, "Introduction: Une autofiction bicolore," in *Blanche et Noir* (1928), written by Louise Faure-Favier (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2006), xix.

¹⁴Little, "Introduction," xix.

¹⁵Roger Little writes that Faure-Favier "was the first woman to fly, albeit as a passenger, with Lucien Bossoutrot as a pilot, across the English Channel, took the female altitude record to 6500 metres in 1920, and, extending her work as a journalist, published the first official guides to the early air routes," Roger Little, "Blanche et Noir: Louise Faure-Favier and the Liberated Woman," *Australian Journal of French Studies*, XXXVI, 2 (1999): 216.

¹⁶Little, "Introduction," xxv, and idem, "Blanche et Noir," 226.

¹⁷Little, "Introduction," xxviii.

¹⁸Berliner, *Ambivalent Desire*, 71-107.

¹⁹Ibid., 107-122.

²⁰Berliner's translation of Louise Faure-Favier, *Blanche et Noir*, 115 in *ibid.*, 66.

²¹Ibid., 67.

²²Little points out that the "real" Samba Laobé could not possibly be the powerful industrial trader described by Faure-Favier, given that the surname "Thiam" designated a specific class of people restricted to workers and subordinates. See Little, "Blanche et Noir," 223.

²³Berliner's translation of *Blanche et Noir*, 142 in Berliner, *Ambivalent Desire*, 68.

²⁴Le Roux, Hugues. "Psychologie exotique," *L'Exposition de Paris 1889: journal hebdomadaire*, July 27, 1889, 170-171, translated by Palermo, "Identity under Construction," 291 and mentioned by Little, "Introduction," xviii-xix.

²⁵This phrase (*éclaboussures impériales*) is taken from Pascal Blanchard's interview in the daily French newspaper *Libération* where he talks of the "splashes of Empire" to name today's times characterized by "things racial which remain unspoken," in Maria Malagardis, "Noirs: des historiens mettent fin au black-out," *Libération*, February 4, 2012.

²⁶See the English version: Pascal Blanchard et al. eds., *Human Zoos: Science and Spectacle in the Age of Colonial Empires* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2008).

²⁷Pascal Blanchard et al. eds., *Human Zoos: The Invention of the Savage* (Paris: Actes Sud and Musée du Quai Branly, 2011).

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1.5.

Debating the 'African Village' at the North East Coast Exhibition, Newcastle, 1929

Deborah L. Hughes

In early spring 1929, the British Home and Colonial Offices received letters from a variety of sources requesting an investigation into the importation and display of people of African origin at the North East Coast Exhibition scheduled for Newcastle in May of that year. Writing on behalf of the West African Students' Union (WASU) in London, Ladipo Solanke asked the British Government to intervene to prevent what he called the "exploitation of Natives of Africa which wholly contravenes the principles of justice, equity and good conscience, and is diametrically opposed to the present international interracial spirit."¹ At issue for Solanke and others who sought government intervention was the manner in which the ostensibly "anthropological" displays popularized at exhibitions dating back to the Paris exhibition of 1867 created, as one Reverend Hall put it, "an entirely false view of African life...and definitely foster our unfortunate racial prejudices."² The advocates for government intervention pointedly dismissed the scientific value of the display, arguing instead that the 'African Village' was a simple sideshow intended to appeal to the most vulgar expression of British chauvinism. The collateral damage of this cynical gambit, they argued, would be those economically desperate human beings who ought instead to be protected by the British government from the predations of the professional huckster.

Although the Newcastle exhibition was a small-scale affair compared to the great British Empire Exhibition of 1924-25, organizers sought to replicate the experience of the exhibition at Wembley for the purpose of promoting imperial unity and national industry.³ Taking their cues from the Wembley catalog, those managing the Newcastle show sought to balance education with entertainment. Where the 'African Village' resided in this fraught dichotomy is the subject of this paper. The correspondence that developed between representatives of the British government, the WASU, and other institutions including the Anti-Slavery and Aboriginal Protection Society (ASAPS) and the League Against Imperialism (LAI), offers rich material for an investigation into changing attitudes towards race and colonial difference in Britain in the early twentieth century. In evaluating the positions articulated by Solanke and others in their petition to the British Government to stop the 'African Village' from being performed at Newcastle, two issues become especially significant: first, the changing value placed on popular anthropology in the interwar period and, second,

the apparently increasing authority given to anti-colonial, anti-racist activists in Britain after World War I. One may detect in Solanke's exchange with the British Home and Colonial Offices a movement away from racially informed definitions of British imperial exceptionalism towards a more nuanced accommodation of the colonial subject as part of the wider British community. This movement appears to have been aided by the devaluation of popular anthropology in this period.

Although anthropological displays were once considered main attractions at these imperial exhibitions, after World War I they were no longer considered part of the edifying content of the show. Displays of human beings in their "natural habitat" had been part of the "exhibitionary complex" since the earliest world's fairs.⁴ The practice of bringing people from overseas to the exhibition seems to have begun in 1867 at the Paris Exposition Universelle. After this show, the most common exhibition-style 'African villages' were exported from the French Empire. According to Mackenzie the "French had apparently perfected the organization of travelling troupes of 'native' entertainers, who entertained by being themselves and pursuing supposedly normal activities." Senegalese and Dahomeyan villages, and the performers hired to inhabit them, made frequent reappearances at shows throughout Europe and the United States. In fact, the participants in the Newcastle display were members of one of these troupes. Of the seven imperial exhibitions held in Great Britain between 1851 and 1951, all but the post-World War II event (the 1951 Century of Progress Exhibition) included a live-action display of colonial people demonstrating their daily lives for the metropolitan spectator. These "living anthropological exhibits" contributed to the Late Victorian "taste for theatrical spectacle which...set out to create living imperial icons."⁵

Scholars interested in museum display and exhibitions have explored many of the ways that ostensibly anthropological displays worked to construct and affirm a shared national or imperial identity among viewing audiences.⁶ It is generally believed that displays of the "colonial Other" worked to affirm a sense of racial and social superiority among European participants that not only justified the imperial project, but validated white privilege.⁷ Much of the historiography that deals with the intersection between anthropology and popular spectacle has focused on this question of human and cultural display and its received meaning among audiences. This paper contributes to that conversation by offering a glimpse of how immigrant and local activists were able to make use of changing perspectives in anthropological discourse to promote their own cause of subject equality in the British Empire.

Although fairs and expositions had clearly articulated economic goals, British imperial exhibitions were primarily organized between 1851 and 1951 to popularize imperialism. Over that century, MacKenzie argues, one can "chart the rise and fall of imperial sentiment" in Britain by what themes enlivened the more serious aspects of the show.⁸ Although anthropological displays were once considered main attractions at these imperial exhibitions, as Solanke's letters to the British Government make clear, after World War I they were no longer considered part of the edifying content of the show.

There are two possible reasons for this change in audience interest in the ethnological display of the “colonial Other” in the twentieth century exhibitions that dotted the imperial landscape. First, in the wake of the Great War, uncritical enthusiasm for the Empire and its civilizing mission began to fall out of favor, exhausted in large part, Erez Manela has suggested, by the trauma of war and heightened enthusiasm for the promise of national self determination as expressed in the foundation of the League of Nations.⁹ Indeed, this is likely what Solanke was referring to when he mentioned “the present international interracial spirit” in his letter to the Colonial Office. From 1919 to 1922, the British Foreign Office had to contend with independence movements in both India and Egypt; in addition, vocal and sometimes violent protests against racially unjust policies in South Africa, Kenya, and Australia were complicating efforts to hold the Empire together. By the time of the great British Empire Exhibition at Wembley in 1924 and 1925, the traditional approach to propagandizing imperialism in the metropole must have seemed to many old-fashioned and out of step with an embryonic anti-colonial consciousness.

Second, the study of anthropology was going through a major period of transformation in the early twentieth century. According to Kuklick, debates among academic anthropologists that began just before the outbreak of the War had simmered over in the 1920s to influence popular conceptions of racial and cultural difference. During the first half of the twentieth century, Kuklick notes, anthropologists began to debate whether or not “human racial and cultural variation were entirely independent of each other.”¹⁰ Through these debates anthropology became fractured into specialties and through the work of the specialists, new approaches and methods evolved. After the war, “anthropologists became more insistent that race did not determine culture – not the least because they became aware of the political abuses that could be rationalized on the grounds of scientific racism.”¹¹ By the 1930s, the importance placed on research methodology and scientific regularity contributed to the “differentiation of their work from that directed toward a popular audience.”¹² As a result, academic anthropologists distanced themselves from “armchair anthropologists” and dismissed popularized ethnological displays as holdovers from a less enlightened age.¹³ Those event coordinators who chose to include exhibits such as the ‘African Village’ in their shows, expositions, or fairs did so knowing that they appealed more to the audience’s desire for entertainment than for education and cultural enrichment. Significantly, the Newcastle show in question was arranged by a privately owned and operated company with over twenty-five years of experience catering entertainments to exhibitions in Europe and America. Evidently, showmen--not professional anthropologists--delivered the ‘African Village’. Once such shows had devolved into the category of entertainment at the exhibition, their organizers could no longer justify their dehumanizing effect on objectively scientific grounds.

The entertainment value of the ‘African Village’ was really not in dispute by 1929. In the February 16 edition of the *Newcastle Chronicle* one headline announced, “Thrills for the Exhibition”, and the accompanying article touted first access to a “water chute with [a]

400 feet track” and second to “West African Natives’ True to Life Setting.” The attractions, readers were informed, would be provided by Mr. H. B. Singer, the Managing Director of Exhibition Attractions, Ltd, who knew that an exhibition had to offer a combination of thrills and human curiosities to draw a crowd. In meeting these popular expectations, Singer promised to deliver to Newcastle representatives of the Fullah “tribe” who were, as he told the paper, “practically savages” and “virtually heathens.” Those who paid the price of admission could thus enjoy the thrill rides and, from the comfort of their own country, play casual anthropologist to the goings-on of anachronistic humankind. In so boldly identifying the ‘African Village’ as an amusement sideshow, Singer opened himself and the exhibition up to complaints by groups interested in subject equality throughout the British Empire.

So it is in the context of social transformation and re-evaluation of the significance of race and difference in academic anthropology that Solanke and others wrote their letters demanding government intervention on behalf of the exploited and abject. Although many groups offered their opinions on this debate, those representing the West African Students’ Union were perhaps the most significant from the point of view of the British Government. The WASU came together in the 1920s as an activist voice against the exploitation and mistreatment by Europeans of people of African origin. The group was comprised of young African men of high social standing who lived in Great Britain while attending to their studies. These young men were the future leaders of their home communities, but for many of them life in Great Britain was a daily test of personal endurance and loyalty to the British Empire. They faced racial discrimination at their universities around the United Kingdom, in the cities in their efforts to find affordable accommodation, and in their attempts to access the elite privilege they expected as members of royal and aristocratic families. Frustrated by the racism they encountered on a daily basis, the founding members of the WASU committed themselves to overcoming the color bar and racism in their adopted communities.¹⁵

As part of its general interest in the fair and equitable treatment of Africans in Great Britain, the WASU took up the cause of the people involved in Singer’s African Village at Newcastle. According to Solanke’s letter to the Home Office, the WASU strongly protested Singer’s plan “both to induce and to bring to England about 100 West African Natives, against their wish [sic].” The Union was unanimous in the opinion that the Home Secretary and Secretary of State for the Colonies needed to investigate the matter and “see to it that the said Mr. Singer and his Associates...are restrained from carrying out the said project...” This exhortation was based on three principles. The WASU first argued that the African Village would result in the promotion of racial prejudice through the exploitation of “illiterate Natives of Africa.” Second, the group believed that the spirit of the event was “diametrically opposed to the present international and inter-racial spirit” and would, in consequence, do much to “frustrate the effort for the establishment of cooperation as well as the permanent peace towards the whole human race.” Third and finally, Solanke reminded his correspondents, the issue of exploitation had already been admitted by the Government in response to a similar series of events related to the Wembley Exhibition in 1924.¹⁶

Indeed, the experience of Africans at the British Empire Exhibition at Wembley was central to the formation of the WASU in the 1920s. According to Hakim Adi, the WASU became so significant a force in organizing against the exploitation and mistreatment of especially West Africans in Great Britain that the British government found it practical to cooperate with them. The Colonial Office wanted to appeal to the WASU as part of a general initiative to manage the more than 125 African students in the United Kingdom during the 1920s. These students represented families that ruled many of the colonial territories managed by the imperial government, and many in the Colonial Office believed it necessary to nurture positive relations with these young men as an assurance against anti-colonial nationalism in the future. Fear that mistreated African students would join communist or other anti-colonial groups led many in the Colonial Office to suggest that more had to be done to court the largely elite, African students at the major educational institutions in the United Kingdom. This anxiety made the Colonial Office especially keen to respond to Solanke's inquiries. Indeed, in an effort to demonstrate respect for the nature of his complaint, the Office invited Solanke to assist the government in investigating the matter of the African Village more thoroughly.¹⁷

Archival evidence suggests that there was a broad range of interest in protecting the people traditionally dehumanized by ethnological exhibition displays and concern for the implications of the Newcastle show on the future unity of the Empire. Other more traditionally engaged voices also weighed in on the question of the misrepresentation of African subjects at the Newcastle show. In correspondence with Leo Amery at the Dominions Office, the Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Protection Society (ASAPS) admitted its own frustrations with the apparent inhumanity of this ethnological informed sideshow. The League Against Imperialism (LAI) had something to say on the matter, too. The LAI informed William Ormsby-Gore at the Colonial Office that its members believed the exhibition would be "deeply offensive to the African Peoples and to the Negroes in the West Indies and America" and would "arouse racial antagonism."¹⁸ The promotion of British imperialism at the exhibition could no longer rely for its articulation on the shibboleth of cultural superiority couched in scientific racism. Indeed, these documents suggest that if exhibition organizers continued to use Victorian-era ethnological tropes, they would meet with stiff resistance from the very British audiences they hoped to entertain. To go forward with the show as planned could possibly sow the seeds of anti-colonialism in a most unintended fashion.

Despite all of these considerations, when the North East Coast Exhibition opened in May of 1929, the 'African Village' was a major component of its entertainment pavilion. Although Solanke's arguments against the show were based on questions of humane and just treatment of people of color and colonial origin, from the Government's point of view, intervention hinged entirely on the question of citizenship. Were the people brought to Newcastle for the exhibition British citizens? If yes, then it had to be admitted in principle that the government should do something to protect them from exploitation. If no—as turned out to be the case—then there was little legal justification for either Home or Colonial

Office intervention even if human rights were at stake. In response to these letters, the Prime Minister requested more information as to whence the Africans would be recruited, and whether they were in fact British subjects. This matter of origins became the central concern of His Majesty's Government because precedent for official intervention in preference to the rights of colonial citizens had been established in the wake of the Wembley exhibition in 1924. The government officials tasked with responding to the letters of complaint from Solanke in particular understood that they could not simply dismiss the issue out of hand; in addressing similar complaints of exploitation at Wembley, the Colonial Office and Home Office had affirmed in principle that the government stood against the misrepresentation and exploitation of British subjects at events of this nature.

In all of the letters written to the Government on the matter, the response from Colonial Office officials was an assertion of powerlessness. Correspondents were informed that the Secretary of State for the Colonies "was unable to take any steps [to resolve the matter] since the control of the admission of people to this country does not rest with him, and it is not within his power to regulate the actions of persons resident in French, Spanish, or other territory in Africa." What the Colonial Office failed to make transparent, whether they were aware of it or not, was that the Home Office had officially authorized Singer to bring persons of African origin into the country for the purpose of putting on the African Village at Newcastle. In granting the go-ahead to Singer, the Home Office obliged him to guarantee maintenance of the African performers in his care while in the United Kingdom and to ensure the participants' repatriation to their country of origin. He was also expected to submit these performers to medical inspection upon arrival.¹⁹ The Home Office had taken Singer on his word that he could provide French documentation for each of the African men and women he brought into the country, and it was satisfied that the Fullah and Senegalese people were adequately provided for by Singer's company. There was no further investigation into the matter, and nowhere in the official documents is there evidence that anyone at the Home Office objected to the proposed African Village on the grounds of human exploitation or revulsion against the continued deployment of scientific racism in the name of entertainment.

The Government's deferral, however, proved wholly unsatisfactory to protestors. As Reginald Bridgeman told Ormsby-Gore, members of the League Against Imperialism did not care whether the people in question came "from Timbuctoo [sic] or elsewhere." Solanke also responded to this hedge by declaring, "In view of the fact that in this country, the consideration as to whether an African Native comes from either British, or French German or Belgian, or otherwise possession in Africa is not only immaterial but also unknown to the ordinary man in the street in a case where a racial question as the present one is involved..."²⁰ Advocates for government intervention might well have begun their argument with questions of subject protection, but they did not stop there in pressing their point. Indeed, they argued that subject equality was only one of many reasons for the Colonial Office and Home Office to stop the African Village from happening at the Newcastle exhibition.

Ultimately, their primary concern was to demonstrate greater respect for the dignity of all human beings, irrespective of colonial status. This was in keeping with a generally growing interest among advocates in Pan-Africanism, international communism, and other anti-colonial movements. For Solanke, the LAI, and the ASAPS, the government had to demonstrate its rejection of Victorian-era attitudes toward racial and cultural difference if it was to offer a reasonable alternative to these ideologies. To do so was essential if the government was to maintain its respectability and relevance as a world power.

Evidently, the matter was not closed and the British Government's "our hands are tied" dodge did not shield it from future calls for interference on behalf of those exploited by the show. Nevertheless, Singer's 'African Village' was allowed to carry on and proved a popular distraction at the Newcastle exhibition. There are many questions about reception that are not easily answered in the absence of audience commentary, and one may wonder to what extent visitors to the fair responded to the African Village the way Solanke feared they might. Did they dismiss this portion of the Newcastle exhibition as merely a sideshow, or did the display of African's in their "natural habitat" work to underscore racial prejudice and white privilege? These are questions that are beyond the scope of this paper, but most certainly deserve further consideration in future research.

What we may conclude from this brief study is that once the 'African Village' was stripped of its "scientific" edifice, it became vulnerable to protests against scientific racism and its impact on human rights within and beyond the Empire. The evidence provided by documents within the Colonial Office archives and newspapers from this period indicates that by 1929 the British government was taking very seriously complaints against the use and misuse of colonial persons in the promotion of imperial unity. Further, as historians of anthropological science have noted, professional anthropologists were distancing themselves from such maladroit assertions of difference between and among the peoples and cultures of the world. What I have argued here is that as professional anthropologists implicitly delegitimized such displays as the African Village, these shows were exposed as little more than entertainments in the exhibitionary order. Without the façade of scientific value traditionally affirmed by anthropologists, the ethnographic sideshow became vulnerable to protests by advocates for subject equality and opponents to colonial exploitation. As a result, we may find in the debates surrounding the Newcastle exhibition one site where evolving ideas about anthropology facilitated activism towards a more expansive definition of the rights of colonial people in Britain. Consequently, despite the goals of the show to promote imperial unity, the exhibition once again became a site for contesting subject inequality.²¹

¹Public Record Office, Kew. CO 4178/29/1

²Ibid.

³For more on the British Empire Exhibition of 1924 (Wembley), see Alexander C.T. Geppert, "Wembley 1924-1925," in *Encyclopedia of World's Fairs and Expositions*, ed. John E. Findling and Kimberly D. Pelle (Jefferson, NC and London: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2010), 230-235; Deborah L. Hughes, "Kenya, India and the British Empire Exhibition, 1924," *Race & Class* 37, no. 4 (2006): 66-85; and Donald R. Knight and Alan D. Sabey, *The Lion Roars at Wembley: British Empire Exhibition, 60th Anniversary 1924-1925* (London: Barnard & Westwood, Ltd., 1984).

⁴Tony Bennet, "The Exhibitionary Complex," *New Formations* 4 (1988): 74-80.

⁵John MacKenzie, *Propaganda and Empire* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986): 98-100.

⁶For the most accessible of these sources see Burton Benedict, "International Exhibitions and National Identity," *Anthropology Today* 7, no. 3 (1991): 5-9; Peter Hoffenberg, *An Empire on Display: English, Indian and Australian Exhibitions from the Crystal Palace to the Great War* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001); Robert Rydell, *Fair Representations: World's Fairs and the Modern World* (Amsterdam: VN University Press, 1994); and Paul Greenhalgh, *Ephemeral Vistas: The Expositions Universelles, Great Exhibitions and World's Fairs, 1851-1939* (Manchester: Manchester University Press: 1988).

⁷See Annie E. Coombes, *Reinventing Africa: Museums, Material Culture and Popular Imagination in Late Victorian and Edwardian England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992); Ivan Carp and Steven Lavine, eds., *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display* (Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991); Timothy Mitchel, *Colonising Egypt* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1989); Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1992); Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Knopf, 1993); Mrinalini Sinha, *Colonial Masculinity: The "Manly" Englishman and the "Effeminate" Bengali in the Late Nineteenth Century* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995); and Mabel O. Wilson, "Exhibiting the New American Negro," (paper presented at the World's Fair Symposium, San Francisco, CA, March 30, 2005).

⁸MacKenzie, *Propaganda and Empire*, 98.

⁹For more on this trend see Erez Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment: Self Determination and the International Origins of Anti-Colonial Nationalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

¹⁰Henrika Kuklick, *The Savage Within: The Social History of British Anthropology, 1885-1945*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 12. See also Paul Cocks, "The Rhetoric of Science and the Critique of Imperialism in British Social Anthropology, c. 1870-1940," *History and Anthropology* 9, 1 (1995): 93-119; Roger Miles and Alan Tout, "Exhibitions and the Public Understanding of Science," in *Museums and the Public Understanding of Science*, ed. John Durant (London: Science Museum Board of Trustees, 1992): 27-33; and George W. Stocking, Jr., *Victorian Anthropology* (New York: The Free Press, 1987).

¹¹Kuklika, *The Savage Within*, 12.

¹²Ibid., 13.

¹³For more on anthropology and exhibitions see Penelope Harvey, *Hybrids of Modernity: Anthropology, the nation-state and the universal exhibition* (New York: Routledge, 1996).

¹⁴CO 4178/29/1 Newspaper clipping: "Thrills for the Exhibition," *North Mail and Newcastle Chronicle*, February 16, 1929.

¹⁵Hakim Adi, *West Africans in Britain, 1900-1960: Nationalism, Pan-Africanism and Communism*. (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1998). For more on the student activists in this period see A.J. Stockwell, "Leaders, Dissidents and the Disappointed: Colonial Students in Britain as Empire Ended," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 36, no. 3 (2008): 487-507.

¹⁶CO 4178/39/1 Letter from West African Students' Union to Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, West African Department, Colonial Office, dated 25 March, 1929. As suggested, groups opposed to the display of human subjects for ostensibly anthropological reasons complained that members of one troupe of African villagers were being mistreated. British authorities investigated the case, and Amery later declared that he saw no evidence of mistreatment.

¹⁷Adi, *West Africans in Britain*, 23-51.

¹⁸CO 4178/29/13 Letter from Reginald Bridgeman representing the League Against Imperialism, forwarded to William Ormsby-Gore, Colonial Office, May 5, 1929.

¹⁹CO 4178/29/17 Letter to B. H. Singer from Home Office, Whitehall, March 6, 1929.

²⁰CO 4178/29/8 WASU letter in response to Prime Minister, April 18, 1929.

²¹For more on ways that exhibitions were used as sites for contesting racial and national privileges, see Deborah L. Hughes, "Contesting Whiteness: Race, Nationalism And British Empire Exhibitions Between The Wars." (Ph.D. diss., University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, 2008).

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1.6.

Embodying Touristic Mexico: Virtual and Erased Indigenous Bodies

Ruth Hellier-Tinoco

BODILY WORTH: INDIGENOUS (VIRTUAL) WOMEN: THE MEXICAN PAVILION, HANNOVER, GERMANY, 2000

In a dark and narrow gallery, lit by the flickering glow of thousands of candles, shawled indigenous P'urhépecha women move softly in the night air of the enclosed cemetery-space, kneeling, praying, and placing flowers and food on graves for their deceased loved ones. The atmosphere is one of hushed and quiet reverence, as the visitors who have come to witness this ritual practice tread lightly, peering through the darkness at the spectacle. This is *Noche de Muertos*—Night of the Dead—on the tiny Island of Janitzio, Lake Pátzcuaro, Michoacán, Mexico; or, rather, it is a simulacrum of Night of the Dead on the tiny Island of Janitzio. Notwithstanding the appearance of real bodies, moving in real time, undertaking real activities, no flesh-and-blood living bodies from Janitzio are present inside the Mexican Pavilion in Germany. As the official website notes, “This ‘immersive tunnel’, which can be compared to a LIVING DIORAMA, uses total immersion techniques to plunge visitors into the heart of this celebration of the dead so that they feel ‘as if they were there’. This experience, impossible until now, is a real technological breakthrough. Visitors are given lightweight (polarising) glasses which make it possible to see the 3D effects...”¹ Simply by placing glasses over their eyes, viewers transformed the 2D flat bodies into 3D “real” bodies. In 2000, this virtual experience of Night of the Dead—entitled *Soul of Mexico*—was achieved using a sophisticated configuration of cameras that captured the P'urhépecha women's bodies on film in the cemetery on Janitzio on the first of November the previous year--1999. Each year for Night of the Dead, the activities of the P'urhépecha women in the cemetery are observed by tens of thousands of tourists, visitors, and voyeurs who travel across the waters of the lake to experience the commemoration. Although the bodies of the visitors on the island were absent from the frame of the filmic exhibition, the bodies of the visitors to the exhibition inside the Mexican Pavilion in Germany replicated this presence. To facilitate the expected experience of the visitors to this pseudo-ethnographic display at the world's fair, the brief written statement in the brochure highlighted the fact that the location was a specific, tiny island, completely surrounded by water, signifying purity, authenticity, and a pristine and pre-industrialized society, thereby authenticating these indigenous bodies/people and framing their activity as an uninterrupted practice carried out in an untouched way from time immemorial.

Conforming to the ubiquitous past-present-future configuration instigated over a century ago for Mexico's representation at world's fairs, the Mexican Pavilion at EXPO 2000 incorporated exhibitions to display this relationship, as outlined in a press release: "Mexico is a modern country with very ancient roots, based on traditions and religions, while at the same time vigorously looking to the future."² The "ancient roots" element was partially on display through the design of the pavilion itself, presenting the ultimate pre-hispanic icon: a huge pyramid. Created as a glass superstructure, it replicated the iconicity deployed in the nineteenth century at the world's fair; in 1889 the Mexican pavilion was a representation of an Aztec Palace, with images of Aztec gods, goddesses, and kings in the form of bronze statues, all of which made a "statement about Mexico's Indian legacy in an era of science and nationalism."³ In the twenty-first century, a statement about Mexico's indigenous legacy in an era of mass media, global circuits, and capitalist economies was embodied in the display of P'urhépecha women living in 1999. These bodies were configured within a Darwinian system of genuine specimens, perpetuating an anthropological and ethnographic path of factual and objective reporting in which, in place of stone artifacts, or even live bodies, virtual 3D replicas were exhibited by means of cutting edge science (Fig. 1).



Figure 1. Soul of Mexico, the 3D interactive film exhibition of Night of the Dead on the Island of Janitzio, Lake Pátzcuaro, in The Mexican Pavilion, Expo 2000, the World's Fair, Hannover, Germany, 2000.

FACE VALUE: AN INDIGENOUS (ERASED) OLD MAN: THE MEXICAN PAVILION: SHANGHAI, CHINA, 2010

In a stark white gallery, the wizened, furrowed pinkish face of an old man, topped with a beribboned straw hat, displays a gap-toothed grin. This visage is perched precariously atop a thin metal pole, which is connected to a small plinth on the floor. Two taut suspension filaments rise up to the ceiling, fixing the head in mid-air. This is *el Viejito* – The Old Man – an iconic mask of *La Danza de Los Viejitos*, the Dance of the Old Men, an indigenous P’urhépecha practice from the Island of Jarácuaro, Lake Pátzcuaro, Michoacán, Mexico. This mask—displayed in the exhibition as static and suspended in space—is used for a humorous and vigorous dance in which masked figures hobble meekly into the performing area and then execute intricate and rapid rhythmic footwork to the accompaniment of a string ensemble. The pale skin of the Old Man mask, painted on carved wood or fragile clay, is usually superimposed over the brown skin of a P’urhépecha dancer from Lake Pátzcuaro. In this display, however, the mask was transformed into a face with no “original” face behind it. It had been cut off and severed from any body. In the gallery in Shanghai, The Old Man’s face was surrounded by some thirty other faces and heads, erected on shafts and representing a range of iconic peoples, eras, and locations—the whole gamut of history. All appeared to be masks, with no necks or connected bodies. Some were indeed masks, used for socio-religious ceremonial and dance purposes (*el Diablo* or the devil; the Yaquis’ Deer Dance), referencing indigenous rituals and syncretic or pagan beliefs. These were juxtaposed with replicas of: “real” yet essentialized Mexican people (a miner, a sea captain, a punk, a straw-hatted young man); cartoon-like, fictional people (a king with golden hair and beard); and other iconic faces, such as a stone Olmec head, miniaturized from the massiveness of the original 3000-year-old basalt sculpture. As elements of visual and material culture, masks are highly potent, and are often engaged as a metaphor for Mexico’s history of superimposition, transformation, and multiple identities—one face/people/identity covering another. Although masks are typically connected with traditional and ipso facto low-tech visual cultural practices, as the world’s fair display had to demonstrate Mexico’s place on the world stage, a requisite high-tech cutting-edge technology element was present: video footage of Mexican treasures, viewed by visitors as they placed their own face inside the mask, seemingly looking through its eye-sockets. Each visage/mask allowed visitors to gaze into another world. In this configuration, the mask of the Dance of the Old Man from the Island of Jarácuaro retained the iconicity of its sheer face-value, even as it contained fragments and glimpses of Mexico within it.

In the below-ground gallery space, and displaying the ubiquitous past-present-future continuum, the essentialized display of “Mexico” included authentic Mayan stone objects (ancient and indigenous); an ornately opulent golden gilded colonial *retablo* (colonial Roman Catholic); an original painting by Frida Kahlo (twentieth-century high art); a clay “tree-of-life” sculpture (traditional and symbolic of life-death cycle); and *alebrijes*, sculptures of fantastical creatures in gaudy colors (traditional and fantastical). As the result of an unprecedented decision concerning the Mexican Pavilion, in place of a large

imposing edifice, at grade was a “Kite Forest,” comprising a grassy surface covered with huge multicolored, metal, kite-shaped artifacts atop high poles jutting out at many angles, a place where visitors could wander and enjoy the great outdoors. While above ground the Kite Forest “embodies ecology, environment protection and peace,”⁴ below ground the disembodied P’urhépecha mask of the Old Man was suspended—the absence of the indigenous body was replaced by bodies of visitors (Fig. 2).



Figure 2. The mask of the Dance of the Old Men (La Danza de los Viejitos) from the Island of Jarácuaro, Lake Pátzcuaro, in The Mexican Pavilion, The World’s Fair, Shanghai, China, 2010.

EMBEDDED AND EMBODIED TOURISM: EXCHANGE VALUE AND A GLOBAL MARKETPLACE

As two exhibits in two world’s fairs in the twenty-first century, Night of the Dead on the Island of Janitzio and the mask of the Dance of the Old Men of the Island of Jarácuaro both engage notions of indigenous peoples, practices, and pre-industrial cultural activities enabled through, and juxtaposed with the latest technological advances. Formulating and depicting an image of pre-hispanic and indigenous Mexico alongside modernity and progress has always been an integral element of Mexican representation at world’s fairs, with perpetual debates surrounding issues of indigenous representation, as each item is chosen for its essentialist signification, and trapped in processes of decontextualization, re-signification, and iconicity.

Beyond the fact that these two exhibits are representations of the indigenous P’urhépecha people of Lake Pátzcuaro, they share a history and interrelated trajectory of appropriation and reification, for nationalist and touristic purposes, through processes of performism. Here I use “performism” to refer to the all-encompassing agendas, strategies, practices, and processes that entailed constructing and shaping concepts of peoples, bodies, activities, and places through display and reproduction.⁵ During the early 1920s, in the chaotic and



85. The cemetery on the island of Janitzio, Lake Pátzcuaro, Michoacán, after midnight on All Saints’ Day.



86. Los viejitos of Michoacán.

Figure 3. Photographic representation of Night of the Dead on Janitzio and the Dance of the Old Men of Pátzcuaro as published in 1947 *A Treasury of Mexican Folkways* by Frances Toor, which was widely disseminated in Mexico and the USA.

idealistic aftermath of the Mexican Revolution, both Night of the Dead and the Dance of the Old Men of Lake Pátzcuaro were shaped and promoted as national icons, within the political and ideological climate of fervent nation-building and a burgeoning tourist industry, to create *Mexicanidad* (Mexicanness) and *lo mexicano* (all that was most authentically Mexican). Indigenous people and *indigenismo* (indigeneness) became central components of the rhetoric, policies, and ideologies enacted through state-controlled delineations of otherness and the reification of practices, peoples, and places.

In relation to Night of the Dead, initiating the trajectory that leads directly to configurations of the twenty-first century, a party of official onlookers visited the Island of Janitzio in 1923 for the ritual occasion, marking the beginning of the process of transformation of the ceremony from intimate, private ritual into public spectacle, national and touristic trope and icon, and patrimony of the nation. The activities and bodies of the Janitzio inhabitants undertaking their rituals for Night of the Dead were subsequently documented, disseminated, and exhibited in words, still photographic imagery (Fig. 3),⁶ live theatricalized performances on stages in Mexico City and elsewhere,⁷ and films (including *Janitzio* [1935] and *Maclovía* [1948]). By the mid-1940s, Night of the Dead on Janitzio was attracting Mexican and global tourists, and had “become one of the most famous spectacles of Mexican indigenous life... Great crowds of tourists have come, and the Tarascan [P’urhépecha] women show no hesitancy in talking with them.”⁸ As part of the attraction, the Island of Janitzio, one of the most iconic and oft-reproduced geophysical features of Mexico, was framed as an ancient landmass, rising out of the water and simultaneously incorporated into the body of water, signifying a place and its peoples protected and preserved since time immemorial. Associated with P’urhépecha men fishing with butterfly fishing nets (even depicted in the Disney film *The Three Caballeros*), Night of the Dead on Janitzio remains a site and sight for tourists, promoted through tourist guide-books, postcards, websites, advertisements, and romanticized films, and drawing crowds of 100,000 spectators to the cemetery.

Correspondingly, in 1923 the Dance of the Old Men of Jarácuaro was appropriated, commodified and transformed into a fixed choreographic and public spectacle, when government officials requested one man, Nicolás Bartolo Juárez from Jarácuaro, to go to Mexico City in order to teach the dance to students, who performed it on stage in a theater for an audience of foreign visitors. Prior to this it was an informal masked-dance occurring mostly in Christmas and New Year festivities around the streets of the village. From 1923 onward, both the Dance of the Old Men and Night of the Dead were re-presented on stages in Mexico City in theatricalized productions, for example in the *Teatro Mexicano del Murciélagos* (1924)⁹ and *Hamarándecua--P’urhépecha customs* (1930).¹⁰ Subsequently incorporated into the repertoire of representative authentic Mexico dances, the Dance of the Old Men was increasingly taught in schools, captured in photographs, and deployed as a tourist icon on souvenirs and in guidebooks. In a state-driven populist move, after the 1968 Tlatelolco massacre and the Olympic Games in Mexico City, the Dance of the Old Men was toured abroad and at home in potent contexts. As an essential element in ballet folklórico programs, it was danced in Mexico and by dance troupes in the U.S. after the civil

rights Chicano movement of the 1960s. In the twenty-first century, villagers from the island of Jarácuaro still perform the dance for tourists who visit the state capital city of Morelia and the island of Janitzio.

As cultural practices, both Night of the Dead and the Dance of the Old Men are thoroughly bound up with economic issues; as Néstor García Canclini has noted, “in reality, economy and culture march along intertwined with one another...any practice is simultaneously economic and symbolic.”¹¹ As *cultural* practices both Night of the Dead and the Dance of the Old Men were modified, resignified, and redeployed as commodities, with meanings and functions that were shaped and reorganized into a unified system of symbolic production and expression with an exchange value in a larger system—a larger system that extends to the world’s fairs. Since the early twentieth century tourism, mass consumption, corporate power, and purchased entertainments have formed the central features and functions of world’s fairs.¹² I propose that issues of tourism were embedded in the exhibits centering on Night of the Dead and the Dance of the Old Men at the 2000 and 2010 world’s fairs. Indeed, in Shanghai in 2010, Mexico explicitly promoted tourism, selling a fifteen-day tourist package showcasing Aztec and Mayan culture.

It is, I offer, no coincidence that in 2006 the iconic mask of the Old Man from Jarácuaro was the subject of the central of three photographs in the massive promotional poster campaign of the Mexican Tourist Board in Europe (Fig. 4). At least in this visual image the P’urhépecha masked, dancing body was re-presented with a brown-skinned hand clutching the roughly hewn walking stick, so integral to the dance. Analogously, romanticized photographic images of Night of the Dead on the island of Janitzio appear in the Mexican Tourist Board’s promotional literature, and also in countless tourist guidebooks. In a transnational system of distribution and circulation, these practices are highly valuable, offering great returns. This commoditization of indigenous cultural practices perpetuates the long history of exoticist display and spectacularization for economic return, as those practices are co-opted for capital’s benefit.

However, most potently, it is not “simply” indigenous practices, artifacts, and objects, but rather indigenous bodies/people, that provide the key to comprehending the deployment of Night of the Dead and the Dance of the Old Men at the world’s fairs. Following the path of exhibiting humans at world’s fairs, and maintaining the trajectory of indigenous representation as a fundamental aspect of the Mexican presence at world’s fairs, bodies act as the ultimate signifier of authenticity, the



Figure 4. A photo of the Dance of the Old Men of Jarácuaro is given center position in the Mexican Tourist Board’s European advertising campaign in 2006. The other iconic images are the volcano Popocatepetl, the colonial church at Cholula, and rolling mountains with cacti (and golfers!).

“really real.” Following a Darwinian trajectory, there is particular potency accorded living “authentic” bodies or specimens. The body itself, as a physical entity, acts as “the ultimate signifier of identity and the final authenticator,” engaging with “the intractability of the notion of the ‘body’ as that which is really ‘real’, a repository of truth.”¹³ In Germany in 2000, the live people/bodies were captured and treated to become digitized images in a twenty-first century materialization of nation. Yet, despite the overtness of the exhibition as a copy of the “real” Night of the Dead on Janitzio, the over-extended efforts to present the realness and liveness produced not a simulation of the reality, but a giant simulacrum—a hyperreality—disconnected from the previous reality and made particularly potent through the negation of the presence of the thousands of onlookers. Resonating with Disneyland, this hyperreality promised a superior experience of otherness,¹⁴ as the scene in the cemetery was not sullied by the inauthentic bodies of the visitors, which were left outside the frame. In Shanghai in 2010, the real indigenous body of a P’urhépecha man was suggested, imagined, and even erased, with only the mask remaining, embodying the ultimate transformation of a mask behind which the body/person is no longer visible while the icon of economic value remains.

¹www.mexico21.org. Accessed November 2000.

²“Hanover 2000: de pinxi, the Belgian specialist in interactive experiences, has created the two key attractions of the Mexican Pavilion,” Press Release, de pinxi. Brussels, 5 June, 2000.

³Mauricio Tenorio-Triollo, *Mexico at the World’s Fairs: Crafting a Modern Nation* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1996), 81.

⁴The Mexico Pavilion. http://en.expo2010.cn/c/en_gj_tpl_3_htm. Accessed October 2011.

⁵Ruth Hellier-Tinoco, *Embodying Mexico: Tourism, Nationalism and Performance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

⁶Image in Frances Toor, *A Treasury of Mexican Folkways* (Mexico City: Mexico Press, 1947), n.p. See also Frances Toor, “The Festival of the Dead,” *Mexican Folkways* 1/ 2 (1925): 17-22; and Carlos González, “La ceremonia de la ofrenda a los difuntos en el cementerio de la isla de Janitzio, la noche del primer de noviembre,” *Etnos* 3a. época (1925): 11-16.

⁷See, for example, Francisco Domínguez and Carlos González, *Hamarádecua - Costumbres* (México: Departamento del Distrito Federal, Dirección General de Acción Educativa, 1930).

⁸George Foster, *Empire’s Children: The People of Tzintzuntzan* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, Institute of Social Anthropology, 1948), 220-21. See also Ruth Hellier-Tinoco, “Corpo/Reality, Voyeurs and the Responsibility of Seeing: Night of the Dead on the island of Janitzio, Mexico,” *Performance Research* 15/1 (2010): 23-31; and Ruth Hellier-Tinoco, “Dead bodies/Live bodies: death, memory and resurrection in contemporary Mexican performance,” in *Performance, Embodiment, & Cultural Memory*, edited by Colin Counsell & Roberta Mock (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2009), 114-139.

⁹Antonio Magaña Esquivel, *Imagen y realidad del teatro en México (1533-1960)* (Mexico City: Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes y Escenología, 2000), 167-170.

¹⁰Domínguez and González 1930.

¹¹Néstor García Canclini, *Transforming Modernity: Popular Culture in Mexico* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1993), 11.

¹²Tenorio-Trillo 1996, 199.

¹³Jane Desmond, *Staging Tourism: Bodies on Display from Waikiki to Sea World* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1999), xiv-v.

¹⁴Dean MacCannell. "Remarks on the Commodification of Cultures," in *Hosts and Guests Revisited: Tourism Signs of the 21st Century*, eds. V. Smith and M. Brent (New York: Cognizant Communication Corporation, 2001), 388.

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AMERICAN IDENTITY PAVILION

SECTION 2



2.1.

Frontiers of the World's Columbian Exposition

Stephen J. Whitfield

Frontiers can be crossed, or they can divide. Both meanings of the term can be applied to the many-sided phenomenon of the World's Columbian Exposition, which opened and closed in 1893. Emblematic of the final decade of the nineteenth century, the World's Columbian Exposition becomes especially intelligible when considered from the perspective of frontiers. This essay suggests six applications of a concept that mean either a crossing, or a separation. Not coincidentally, the World's Columbian Exposition was held in Chicago, a frontier city that grew to staggering proportions in less than a century. In rising from an unnoticed trading post to an industrial metropolis, Chicago itself constituted a historic transformation, separated from obscurity to one of the representative sites of urban modernity. The host of the fair was then the seventh largest city in the world.¹ The second frontier is one of periodization, a marker that betokens meaning. Occurring at the *fin-de-siècle*, the fair marked the border between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and thus between the rural and the urban, the village and the metropolis, the agrarian and the industrial, and the present and the future. The United States would shortly become an imperial power, with the defeat of Spain in 1898. Seen in retrospect, the World's Columbian Exposition therefore marked the rise from parochial status to an international influence, an impact that the American gift for technological innovation undergirded. Geopolitics is therefore the third frontier. The depression that had begun a year earlier heightened the division between rich and poor, just as the squalor and misery of Chicago itself could be contrasted with the dream of a fabulous future—the White City. The separation of class indicates the fourth frontier.

The gaudy Midway Plaisance marked the emergence of mass culture, and the popular arts would eventually permeate virtually every aspect of society in the coming century. The folk arts and the local and regional cultures of the nineteenth centuries would be displaced by the apparatus of mass communications, with its extensive and inescapable distribution of images and sounds that would constitute popular culture. Taste would become a way of separating Americans from one another, due to a distinctive popular culture, and thus serves as the fifth frontier.

At the fair, a young historian would formulate the single most powerful idea by which the national experience would be understood. He would insist upon the significance of the American frontier itself, as a people moved westward across a continent; and thus the United States would be forged. These were six kinds of frontiers, or dividing lines, that marked the historical salience of the 1893 fair and that endow it with extraordinary retrospective significance. The 1893 fair constituted an illuminating moment for students of the culture of the period, because the World's Columbian Exposition strove for a unity of expression in which were coalesced the values and hopes of the era. Planned since the mid-1880s, the fair was designed to celebrate the four-hundredth anniversary of Columbus's landing in the New World. But delays prevented the fair from opening earlier than 1893, which was the 401st anniversary. The World's Columbian Exposition was seen as symbolic of the achievements of the new nation and of one of its newest cities, and was thus a gesture of national and civic pride.² Chicago could show off before the assembled visitors of the globe, and its civic leaders intended to reaffirm faith that American power and prosperity—and the various ornaments of its civilization—could be perpetuated and extended. Yet such assertiveness could not fully disguise anxiety about the destiny of the republic.

Chicago had barely existed at the beginning of the nineteenth century. By 1890 over a million residents lived there and the city would grow by another half a million residents in each of the following two decades. In 1847 Chicago lacked a single mile of railroad track; within seven years the city had become the nation's rail center. The terrifying fire of 1871 had been the most destructive in the history of American cities, which is why the fair was devised to prove how much of a phoenix, rising from the ashes, Chicago had become.³ In 1890 a company capitalized at \$5 million was organized to install the fair, and was so successful that the number of shares soon doubled. The act of incorporation called for promotion of "the arts, industries, manufactures, and products of the soil, mine and sea."⁴ The site nevertheless needed the approval of Congress, which was granted; and President Benjamin Harrison, a Republican, was supposed to dedicate the buildings on October 12, 1892. But because his wife was dying, Vice President Levi Morton came instead to mark the occasion. The fair was not to be officially opened until the spring of 1893, however; and by then Grover Cleveland, a Democrat, had been elected President.

The site chosen in February of 1891 consisted of 1,037 acres of marshlands on the edge of Lake Michigan, a desolate spot called Jackson Park. Hubert Howe Bancroft, a major historian of the American West, described the site as "a sandy waste of unredeemed and desert land, in its center a marshy hollow, and without a trace of vegetation."⁵ Redemption of this terrain was the goal of the fair, making it a version of what hardy frontier families were already doing with epic persistence on the Great Plains; and thus a culture was expressing itself, a nation was defining itself. As though the fair were a microcosm of the republic that was spanning a continent, the World's Columbian Exposition sprawled across an area four times larger than any previous international fair. Chicago's fair grounds covered 633 acres, compared to 160 acres in Paris four years earlier.⁶ The 1893 fair cost \$19 million to construct.⁷

The site was chosen—and would be redeemed—by the versatile Frederick Law Olmsted (1822-1903), the foremost landscape artist in the nation's history. Joined mostly by his colleague Calvert Vaux, Olmsted bore responsibility for Central Park in Manhattan, for Prospect Park in Brooklyn, for the Public Gardens and the Fenway in Boston, and for the Capitol grounds in Washington. He designed the first municipally-sponsored playground and the first scientifically-managed forest. He is also partly credited for preserving the scenic beauties of Niagara Falls and of Yosemite. No American was more suitable to direct the draining of the swamps and the building of a city beyond the heart of Chicago. In Jackson Park, Olmsted built artificial canals, lakes and islands, connected by bridges. So elegant was his achievement that it seemed to some observers that, in miniature, the New World was being reborn. "This wilderness," Bancroft blissfully announced, had been transformed into a "garden spot."⁸

The novelist William Dean Howells said that the swampland had been "made to smile," and discerned the partial realization of his utopian dream of Altruria in the formation of the White City, where the major exhibition halls were built.⁹ *A Traveler from Altruria* (1894) was, incidentally, one of the thirteen novels that the fair at least in part inspired. Howells's book makes the exposition an actual foretaste of utopia. For the fair resembled Altruria "in being a design, the effect of a principle, and not the straggling and shapeless accretion of accident."¹⁰ The integration of agriculture with industry was emphasized in a way that offered hope to many of the American visitors. They could cherish the faith that familiar signs of enterprise—the virtues of the early republic, with its myth of the stalwart yeoman—might be combined with commercial and technological might.¹¹ This anticipation of even greater power was undoubtedly responsible for much of the wonder and excitement that the fair stimulated among the 28 million visitors who arrived between May and October, 1893 (the opening and closing dates of the World's Columbian Exposition). Among them was the novelist Hamlin Garland, who sent an urgent letter to his parents in 1893, pleading with them to leave their farm and come to Chicago: "Sell the cook[ing] stove if necessary and come. You *must* see this fair."¹²

Howells himself needed no such command. He was the personal guest of the consulting architect in charge of the fair, Daniel Burnham (1846-1912), who typified the boosterism that pervaded Chicago. The name "Windy city" is attributed to Richard Henry Dana of the *New York Sun*, who was not referring to the wintry blasts but rather to the "hot air" of Chicago's many braggarts.)¹³ Burnham, for one, would come to believe that the impact of the World's Columbian Exposition could be compared, in the nation's past, only to the American Revolution and the Civil War.¹⁴ Burnham assigned the general decorative scheme to Augustus Saint-Gaudens (1848-1907), the sculptor whose most famous works included the haunting, draped figure, located in Rock Creek Cemetery in Washington, D. C. That memorial to the wife of Henry Adams the sculptor variously called the "Mystery of the Hereafter" and "The Peace that Passeth Understanding".¹⁵ In Chicago Saint-Gaudens was so awed by the talent that had been assembled to work with him and under him that he hailed the collaboration as "the greatest meeting of artists since the fifteenth century."¹⁶

In spite of the rhetoric of unified vision, so jumbled was the site upon which these visionaries built that a visitor could see from one location a Renaissance dome, Roman columns, Romanesque arches, a Greek pediment, and depictions of elks and buffalo in stone. Perhaps this was also a testament to the diffuse and varied experiment that constituted the republic itself. Burnham nevertheless merits recognition as the prodigal father of American urban planning, and 1893 can be certified as the birth of the “City Beautiful” movement.¹⁷ But Chicagoans did not invigorate an existing development, as precedent dictated. Instead they created a separate, enchanting enclave that was intended to demonstrate, as Burnham put it, how “the orderly arrangement of fine buildings and monuments” might suggest “civic beauty [which] satisfies a craving for human nature.”¹⁸ However eclectic in architectural style, the World’s Columbian Exposition also evoked a certain standard of excellence that was reflected in contemporary literature. Take *Yekl* (1896), a tale of Jewish immigrants in New York City written by a protégé of Howells, Abraham Cahan. In one episode, the sweatshop workers sit down to a meal that Gitl, the wife of the protagonist Jake, has prepared. One tailor gets a plate of his favorite dish, borscht, and is ecstatic: “It’s a long time since I tasted such borscht!” He then compliments Gitl: “It ought to be sent to the Chicago Exposition. The *missess* would get a medal.”¹⁹ In the last decade of the nineteenth century, there could be no higher praise.

At the Exposition Universelle in 1889, the great monument erected for that occasion had been the bizarre but very durable structure that Georges Eiffel had designed. Its counterpart in Chicago was composed of the largest piece of steel forged up to that time, for the largest piece of revolving machinery on the planet. This 16-story wheel on the Midway was constructed under the supervision of George Ferris. His handiwork—which weighed twelve hundred tons, from which dangled thirty-six pendulum cars, each of which could hold forty passengers—was one of those oddities that undoubtedly lured as many visitors to ride as could be persuaded to visit the White City itself. Latin Americans still refer to the Ferris wheel as *la rueda de Chicago*.²⁰ It was the most famous of the novelties and extravaganzas of popular culture, which were generally located outside of the White City that Howells so strikingly admired. They could be sampled along the mile-long strip that was called the Midway Plaisance. It was another kind of frontier—between the stiff moralism of the late Victorian ethos and the dynamic mass culture that would become so inescapable in the next century and thereafter. Here, at the intersection of the two expressions of cultural taste, the frontier was a barrier. In actual cities, historian Neil Harris argued, “there was anxiety about the growth of pleasure quarters,” about the intrusion of commerce and temptation. But the fair “kept these areas separated and defined,” and offered both “variety and coherence.”²¹

At the Midway Plaisance, a raucous carnival atmosphere prevailed. Tourists could gawk at the unusual and exotic displays, and could take advantage of a cornucopia of food and drink while staring at the phenomenal variety of our species—from Hungarian gypsies to Dahomean drummers, from Egyptian jugglers and swordsmen to Eskimos, from Javanese carpenters to Sudanese sheiks. There were also Laplanders, Chinese, Syrians, Swedes,

Samoans and Sioux.²² Much of the world—in all its multiplicity—had come to Chicago. The exhibits included the first horseless carriage, which was perhaps the most popular single exhibit.²³ Anyone who tired of absorbing high culture, such as listening to Jan Paderewski playing Chopin, could sample Aunt Jemima’s pancake mix. Among the other performers was Bernarr MacFadden, whose sideshow muscle-flexing and famous slogan that “Weakness is a Crime” helped inaugurate a *fin-de-siècle* fad for physical exercise. (MacFadden’s credo serves as the title of Robert Ernst’s biography). The cult of the strenuous life addressed civilian fears of the eclipse of the manly virtues.²⁴ Another strongman who showed off his physique at the fair was Eugene Sandow, who earned three thousand dollars a week for such stunts as lifting a grand piano with men seated on it, and placing a plank on his chest to enable three horses to walk across it. “The Great Sandow” was hired by Florenz Ziegfeld, Jr. the future theatrical impresario, whose career as a showman began at the fair, where he assisted his father in importing acts for the main show.²⁵ Unlike MacFadden, Harry Houdini did not exactly get his start at the World’s Columbian Exposition. But he was there as a teenage performer, already proving to audiences that skill and will could triumph over obstacles and defy the barriers of time and space. The former Erich Weiss was about to become a name with which to conjure.²⁶ No wonder then that, according to one authority on the vernacular, H. L. Mencken, the word “ballyhoo” originated on the Midway Plaisance.²⁷

The most famous instance of mass entertainment of the era was Buffalo Bill’s Wild West Show, which was located just outside the fairgrounds.²⁸ Also outside the Midway, but entwined in the history of the fair, a musical craze was inaugurated: ragtime.

Among the black musicians who showed up in Chicago that year were Scott Joplin and W. C. Handy. There James Weldon Johnson, a lawyer and educator who would also become a lyricist and poet, met another poet, Paul Lawrence Dunbar; and an important artistic friendship was formed. In Chicago, according to historian Ann Douglas, ragtime “became accessible for the first time when a group of black pianists electrified the public with their ‘rags’.”²⁹ The allure of the Midway, which was pitched to pleasure, thus collided with the Victorian verities of duty and respectability. In 1936 the conflict would be satirized in a nightclub act at Billy Rose’s Casa Mañana, where a song is set at the World’s Columbian Exposition. Singing lyrics written by Billy Rose and Irving Kahal, a man tells a woman that “Instead of making love,/We stand here talking of/The merits of the Fair and Grover Cleveland./Forget the Ferris wheel,/My sugar plum, let’s steal/Into the painted realms of make-believe land.”³⁰ Fantasy was the sort of promise that fair was expected to deliver.

Though the World’s Columbian Exposition offered the World Congress of Beauty (with “40 Ladies from 40 Nations”), this was the first fair to take women somewhat seriously. The Woman’s Building benefitted from a \$200,000 contribution that was provided by the local realtor Potter Palmer and his wife Bertha, the sort of Chicagoans who would be immortalized (though not by name) at the end of the decade in Thorstein Veblen’s mordant classic, *The Theory of the Leisure Class*. (In the floor of the barber shop of Potter Palmer’s hotel, the Palmer House, silver dollars were embedded, when it was not uncommon for

workers to be earning a dollar a day.)³¹ Bertha Palmer (1849–1918) directed the Women's Building, which Sophia Hayden designed in the Italian Renaissance style. Only women were engaged in its planning and its programs.³² To provide two murals, Palmer commissioned two American painters based in Paris, her friend Mary Cassatt (on "Modern Woman") and Mary MacMonnies (on "Primitive Woman"). Cassatt had advised her friend to collect French Impressionism; and the paintings that Bertha Palmer lent to the fair allowed visitors from, say, the Dakotas to see for themselves the bold and original works of Degas, Manet, Monet, Renoir and Pissarro. This was exposure to high culture at its most sublime. But despite Mary Cassatt's own fame, and despite her friendship with Degas, for example, a Philadelphia newspaper covering the fair preferred to identify her instead as the sister of Alexander J. Cassatt, the president of the Pennsylvania Railroad.³³

The World's Columbian Exposition attracted other artists and intellectuals who lent their talents to its success. The Japanese pavilion displayed prints that Frank Lloyd Wright admired so deeply that they influenced his later architecture. Philosophers John Dewey and Josiah Royce and social scientist Frank Lester Ward were among the luminaries who spoke at the auxiliary congresses. The World Parliament of Religions met at the fair as well. This was a meeting that was unprecedented in its ecumenism, ranging from James Cardinal Gibbons to Mary Baker Eddy to Swami Vivekenanda. Representatives of 143 American denominations, plus foreign faiths, were present, so that controversial claims were deliberately muted and ethereal idealism was given every indulgence. The president of the World's Congress Auxiliary even declared that "the Parliament of Religions has emancipated the world from bigotry."³⁴ The inevitability of progress was a faith that was widely shared, and was nondenominational. At the World Parliament of Religions, Hannah Greenebaum Solomon formed the National Council of Jewish Women, the first Jewish women's organization in history formed for the promotion of Judaism.

The Parliament of Religions was wrong about the extinction of bigotry, but especially so when racial prejudice is considered. The announcement would certainly have come as a surprise to black Americans, who, on a site that the White City dominated, were almost completely ignored in the various ways that tributes were paid to the advances of civilization. To be sure, on Colored Jubilee Day, the chief speaker was the former slave and abolitionist, Frederick Douglass, whom one historian has ranked as perhaps "the greatest American of all time."³⁵ The segregation of blacks from full participation and from leadership in the fair, Douglass charged, was "only consistent with the fact that we are excluded from every respectable calling." He also objected to the exhibition of a Dahomean village on the Midway, in which visitors' impressions of black lives were confined to the "barbaric rites" of "African savages brought here to act the monkey."³⁶ White racism was then such a commonplace that, by the end of the nineteenth century, no division was considered sharper, no line more impassable than the color line. No distinction seemed greater than the one between the triumphalism of an industrializing nation (and host city) and the reputed backwardness of peoples of color (within the United States and abroad).

“Darkies’ Day at the World’s Fair,” a lithograph that appeared in *Puck*, depicted a group of blacks “as thick-lipped cannibals and dandies,” historian Joseph Boskin observed, “their fairground march suddenly diverted by a tempting pile of watermelons.”³⁷ A more dignified and enlightened approach was taken by the chief assistant of anthropology at the fair. Franz Boas, who had emigrated seven years earlier from Germany, was a professor of anthropology at Columbia University and would become a conspicuous and influential critic of the prevailing assumptions of black inferiority. But his role at the fair was curtailed;³⁸ and only two years after the fair opened, Douglass himself died.

The splendor of the White City was therefore hailed at the time in part because of its very whiteness, an example of what was evoked in the anthem entitled “America the Beautiful” (1893), where its alabaster cities might gleam, undimmed by human tears. But white supremacy could not keep at bay the world outside. The artifice of the White City could not obliterate the actualities of a metropolis noteworthy for its squalor, degradation, waste, greed and crime. Even on the opening day of the World’s Columbian Exposition, the city’s most prominent social worker, Jane Addams, had her purse snatched. (The pickpocket was apprehended.)³⁹ The chasm separating the rich and the poor was dramatic, nor could any traveler from Altruria magically close that gap. The barrier that divided the leisure class from everyone else was suggested by Ward McAllister, the social dictator of New York’s high society—the Four Hundred who belonged to the most prominent families, the exemplars of exclusivity during Edith Wharton’s “age of innocence.” He professed not to grasp why the fair had been named after a mere Italian mariner. “In a social way,” McAllister asserted, “Columbus was an ordinary man.” Other ordinary men and women—about seven thousand of them—helped construct the World’s Columbian Exposition, which was built with such speed and frenzy that accidents were inevitable. Indeed they were common—about one per ten workers was seriously injured or killed. A carpenter who survived such mayhem was Elias Disney.⁴⁰ A little over half a century later, his son Walt would reinvent and expand the amusement park.

Just outside of the fairgrounds, on the lakefront, an outdoor Labor Congress on August 28 attracted a crowd of about thirty thousand. They could listen to speakers like Samuel Gompers, the immigrant cigar-maker who headed the American Federation of Labor; Henry George, the theorist of the single tax that he argued should be imposed on the owners of unused land; and attorney Clarence Darrow, who would become the most embattled advocate of criminal defendants for the next third of a century. These orators spoke to and for those who had to live in the festering slums of cities like Chicago. They spoke to and for the victims of the same industrial forces that the fair was intended to celebrate. Absent, however, was Eugene V. Debs of the American Railway Union. He would become the most famous (or notorious) labor leader in the country the following year, when the Pullman boycott exposed the severity of class warfare.⁴¹ The company town of Pullman was located only a few miles south of the fairgrounds. So miserable were the conditions of the working

class of Chicago that Rudyard Kipling, after visiting the city four years earlier, asserted: "Having seen it, I urgently desire never to see it again." A British labor leader, John Burns, was even more blunt. He called Chicago "a pocket edition of hell."⁴²

Another frontier—the fourth—had thus become visible—a border separating those who lived in appalling misery from those who enjoyed the prosperity that was so unevenly distributed and so subject to the fluctuations of an unregulated market. After the fair closed, thousands of workers joined the swelling ranks of the unemployed and enlisted in Coxey's Army. Jacob Coxey himself spoke on the fairgrounds, and mobilized the jobless to march on Washington to demand public-sector employment. This was a "petition in boots." But Coxey's Army was defeated in the capital, when the leader was arrested for stepping on the grass. Leaderless, the struggle of the jobless collapsed in a year of panic and depression.⁴³ 1893 had exposed the worst feature of the business cycles, the boom-and-bust palpitations that periodically afflicted capitalism.

The depression of 1893 would last about five more years, an ordeal that lent special poignancy to the theme song of the World's Columbian Exposition. The exuberant band of John Philip Sousa, whose career as the nation's march-king took off at the fair, made "After the Ball" into a sensational hit. Charles K. Harris struck a melancholy note with lyrics like the following: "After the ball is over,/After the break of morn,/After the dancers leaving,/After the stars are gone,/Many a heart is aching,/If you could read them all,/Many the hopes have vanished,/After the ball."⁴⁴ Beginning in 1927, that song would be heard again, on Broadway, when *Show Boat* opened. That musical is partly set at the World's Columbian Exposition, and was unusual in revealing sensitivity to the tragedy of white racism. Amid the gaiety and the spread-eagle patriotism of 1893, a stab of concern about the nation's destiny could be detected. What registered was a fear about what class warfare and the shocks of industrialism, urbanization, racism and immigration might be portending.

Especially anxious about modernization was the most subtle of American historians, Henry Adams (1838-1918). Though he had lost the stalwart faith of his distant Puritan ancestors, he "professed the religion of World's Fairs."⁴⁵ The grandson and great-grandson of Presidents, Adams went to Chicago to brood over the full-steam-ahead technological fervor that the World's Columbian Exposition celebrated. He wondered whether those awe-inspiring fabrications of human ingenuity and ambition—the machines—might already be veering out of control. The White City required three times more electricity than the city of Chicago itself, so that, for Adams, bewitched by the twelve huge dynamos that dominated the Westinghouse exhibit, the ubiquitous new form of power that he acknowledged in his autobiography could not be reduced to a metaphor. After two separate visits, he measured the fair as "a step in evolution to startle Darwin."⁴⁶ Adams's brother Charles was also impressed. After initial hesitation ("Hell, I would exactly as soon take a season ticket to a circus"), Charles Francis Adams insisted on staying an extra week. His brother, who recognized that whirl was king elsewhere, concurred with the traveler from Altruria

that the order of the White City did emerge from chaos. *The Education of Henry Adams* (1918), a classic account of declension, devotes an entire chapter to the World's Columbian Exposition as "the first expression of American thought as a unity; one must start there."⁴⁷

But it was left to another historian—a generation younger—to strike the note that most resonated among his contemporaries. At the July session of the American Historical Society (AHA), which held a special meeting in Chicago, a 31-year-old professor from the University of Wisconsin, invited attention to "The Significance of the Frontier in American History." This would constitute the sixth frontier associated with the World's Columbian Exposition. He had earned his doctorate only two years earlier, but the paper that he delivered was to become the most famous essay in all of American historiography. Basing his claims on the examination of census data, Frederick Jackson Turner (1861-1932) concluded that the frontier had closed three years earlier; and with that closing the central phase of the national experience was finished. In 1896 he would speculate that a new frontier was open, for what he termed "imperial expansion" was operating in conjunction with the needs of expanded American commerce. The secretary of the AHA, Herbert Baxter Adams, had worried that the "World's Congress of Historians and Historical Students" might sink into "a pandemonium or an exhibit of cranks." Thanks to Turner, such an indignity did not occur. He had been desperate to put the finishing touches on his essay and thus not embarrass Adams, who had served as Turner's mentor at the Johns Hopkins University. Turner therefore had to turn down an invitation that Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show had issued to the members of the AHA in attendance. The impact of the Turner thesis was not immediate. Other scholars, as well as journalists who heard the presentation, mentioned it only in passing. Theodore Roosevelt, who had tried in vain to persuade Burnham to set aside the wooded island as a hunters' preserve, was among the first to praise Turner's "first class ideas." The future President, who had been born in New York City but had reinvented himself as a Westerner, also congratulated Turner for making coherent "a good deal of thought that has been floating around rather loosely."⁴⁸ The frontier thesis was much more incisive—and ominous—than that.

For a disjunction could easily have been detected between the frontier individualism that he exalted and the coming century of urbanism and cosmopolitanism that the White City portended. The World's Columbian Exposition foreshadowed the urban vision that Turner's version of American distinctiveness could not incorporate. The cosmopolitanism manifested in the displays of sixty nations belied the nationalism that his essay reinforced. The fair should be understood as having accelerated the decline of a markedly frontier society and the cultural authority of an agrarian order. One agent of change was a Chicago company whose mail-order catalogue was decisive in shattering provincial isolation. Sears, Roebuck got its most important transfusion of capital from the Rosenwald family, whose fortune was partly amassed from the ice cream and soda pop concession at the World's Columbian Exposition. Julius Rosenwald and his brother-in-law, Aaron E. Nusbaum, became equal stockholders in a company that, more than any other in the first half of the twentieth

century, would surmount the frontiers separating city from countryside and production from consumption.⁴⁹ Increasingly citizens would become consumers. When President Franklin D. Roosevelt was asked which book he would wish to place in the hands of the Russians who were U. S. allies in the Second World War, he answered: the Sears, Roebuck catalogue.⁵⁰

The economic project that was entwined in “imperial expansion” was spelled out most clearly in the first sentence of Hubert Howe Bancroft’s *Book of the Fair*: “Of all the distinguishing features which separate mankind from the brute creation, perhaps there are none more noticeable than that man is a trading animal.”⁵¹ Indeed, in Henry Blake Fuller’s novel *With the Procession* (1895), inspired by the fair, is recorded the claim that Chicago was “the only great city in the world to which all of its citizens have come for the one common, avowed object of making money.”⁵² An influential socialist critic, the novelist Edward Bellamy, complained that “the underlying motive of the whole exhibition, under the sham pretense of patriotism[,] is business, advertising with a view to individual money-making.”⁵³ Bancroft by contrast saw nothing pejorative in such a purpose, and hoped that the further export of goods would ease social conflict at home and establish the prosperity on which the nation’s welfare depended.⁵⁴

In 1893 no one could be sure if these historians could be prophets as well, even though the passing of the frontier did guarantee that the twentieth century would diverge unpredictably from the past. Some of the most thoughtful visitors were therefore ambivalent, and were suspended between the compulsive optimism of the nineteenth century and even a sense of apocalypse. This is why the World’s Columbian Exposition remains undimmed as a piquant chapter in the history of the American imagination. The last major meeting of the vaguely socialist Nationalist Clubs, which had been formed in the wake of Bellamy’s blockbuster utopian novel, *Looking Backward* (1888), was held at the fair.⁵⁵ Two days before it closed, the mayor of Chicago, Carter Harrison, was assassinated on his doorstep, after returning from the celebration of American Cities Day. After the mourning period, some said the world’s fair should end in fire; others said with the wreckers’ ball.⁵⁶ The combined forms of devastation left standing only a couple of buildings in Jackson Park. What had begun in make-believe ended as a monument to the frustrated longing for something closer to perfection. The World’s Columbian Exposition stood athwart the frontier between the actualities of economic desperation and a vision of communal harmony.

¹Robert Muccigrosso, *Celebrating the New World: Chicago’s Columbian Exposition of 1893* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1993),181.

²Howard Mumford Jones, *The Age of Energy: Varieties of American Experience, 1865-1915* (New York: Viking, 1971), 250, 253-58.

³Muccigrosso, *Celebrating the New World*, 22-23.

- ⁴Quoted in Justus D. Doenecke, "Myths, Machines and Markets: The Columbian Exposition of 1893," *Journal of Popular Culture*, 6 (Spring 1973), 540.
- ⁵Quoted in Doenecke, "Myths, Machines and Markets," 540.
- ⁶Stanley Appelbaum, *The Chicago World's Fair of 1893: A Photographic Record* (New York: Dover, 1980), 5.
- ⁷Muccigrosso, *Celebrating the New World*, 77.
- ⁸Quoted in Doenecke, "Myths, Machines and Markets," 540; Laura Wood Roper, *FLO: A Biography of Frederick Law Olmsted* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973), 425-33, 450.
- ⁹Quoted in Doenecke, "Myths, Machines and Markets," 540.
- ¹⁰Quoted in David F. Burg, *Chicago's White City of 1893* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1976), 295.
- ¹¹Doenecke, "Myths, Machines and Markets," 535-36, 539, 541.
- ¹²Hamlin Garland, *A Son of the Middle Border* (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1917), 258-61.
- ¹³Appelbaum, *Chicago World's Fair*, 1.
- ¹⁴Burg, *Chicago's White City*, 77.
- ¹⁵Louise Hall Tharp, *Saint-Gaudens and the Gilded Era* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1969), 225.
- ¹⁶Quoted in Alan Trachtenberg, *The Incorporation of America: Culture and Society in the Gilded Age* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1982), 217.
- ¹⁷Erik Larson, *The Devil in the White City* (New York: Random House, 2003), 374.
- ¹⁸Quoted in Burg, *Chicago's White City*, 308, 311.
- ¹⁹Burg, *Chicago's White City*, 308; Abraham Cahan, *Yekl and The Imported Bridegroom and Other Stories of the New York Ghetto* (New York: Dover, 1970), 46.
- ²⁰Burg, *Chicago's White City*, 224; Larson, *Devil in the White City*, 287, 327, 380; interview with Robert Callahan, Sirmione, Italy, May 11, 2001.
- ²¹Neil Harris, *Cultural Excursions: Marketing Appetites and Cultural Tastes in Modern America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 123.
- ²²Burg, *Chicago's White City*, 216-221; Doenecke, "Myths, Machines and Markets," 537-38; Zeynep Celik, *Displaying the Orient: Architecture of Islam at Nineteenth-Century World's Fairs* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 80-88.
- ²³Jessica Wilkinson, "The 1893 World's Columbian Exposition: Back to the Future" (2001), unpublished paper in possession of author.
- ²⁴Muccigrosso, *Celebrating the New World*, 160; Richard Hofstadter, *The Paranoid Style in American Politics and Other Essays* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1965), 180-82.
- ²⁵Randolph Carter, *The World of Flo Ziegfeld* (New York: Praeger, 1974), 10-11.
- ²⁶Kenneth Silverman, *Houdini!!!: The Career of Ehrich Weiss* (New York: HarperCollins, 1996), 8-9.
- ²⁷H. L. Mencken, *The American Language: An Inquiry into the Development of English in the United States* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1937), 4th ed., 188.

- ²⁸Joy S. Kasson, *Buffalo Bill's Wild West: Celebrity, Memory, and Popular History* (New York: Hill & Wang, 2000), 94-105.
- ²⁹Jeffrey Melnick, *A Right to Sing the Blues: African Americans, Jews, and American Popular Song* (Cambridge, Ma.: Harvard University Press, 1999), 23, 32, 161, 218, 252; Ann Douglas, *Terrible Honesty: Mongrel Manhattan in the 1920s* (New York: Noonday, 1995), 389.
- ³⁰Irving Kahal and Billy Rose, "The Night is Young and You're So Beautiful," in *Reading Lyrics*, eds. Robert Gottlieb and Robert Kimball (New York: Pantheon, 2000), 360.
- ³¹Joseph Dorfman, *Thorstein Veblen and His America* (New York: Viking, 1934), 89; Garry Wills, "Sons and Daughters of Chicago," *New York Review of Books*, 41 (June 9, 1994), 52; Ray Ginger, *Altgeld's America: The Lincoln Ideal versus Changing Realities* (Chicago: Quadrangle, 1965), 190, 193-203
- ³²Doenecke, "Myths, Machines and Markets," 542.
- ³³Adam Gopnick, "Cassatt's Children," *New Yorker*, 75 (March 22, 1999), 120; Muccigrosso, *Celebrating the New World*, 105.
- ³⁴Quoted in Burg, *Chicago's White City*, 283.
- ³⁵Michael Lind, *The Next American Nation* (New York: Free Press, 1995), 379.
- ³⁶Quoted in Doenecke, "Myths, Machines and Markets," 543.
- ³⁷Joseph Boskin, *Sambo: The Rise and Demise of an American Jester* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 124-25.
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- ⁴⁰Quoted in Ginger, *Altgeld's America*, 18; Richard Schickel, *The Disney Version* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1997), 46.
- ⁴¹Trachtenberg, *Incorporation of America*, 222-25, 232-34.
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⁵⁴Doenecke, "Myths, Machines and Markets," 545.

⁵⁵Howard Quint, *The Forging of American Socialism: Origins of the Modern Movement* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1964), 101.

⁵⁶Muccigrosso, *Celebrating the New World*, 183; Larson, *Devil in the White City*, 380; Burg, *Chicago's White City*, 288-89.

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2.2.

Fixing Race: Visual Representations of African-Americans at the World's Columbian Exposition, Chicago, 1893

Bridget R. Cooks

INTRODUCTION

At the turn of the twentieth century, racist cartoons and ethnic caricatures were expected and enjoyed by the readership of some of America's most popular magazines. Although *Harper's Weekly*, with its lofty subtitle "A Journal of Civilization," positioned itself as a more serious magazine than journals such as *Harper's Bazaar* and *Puck* that routinely printed degrading caricatures, it too occasionally published racist material. During the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago, *Harper's Weekly* published a fifteen-part Saturday cartoon series about the fictional Johnson family by illustrator Peter Newell. Newell's series is in keeping with the popular nineteenth-century caricature tradition regarded as acceptable among his peers in the mainstream American press. However, the Johnson Family cartoons are remarkable because they are the only racist images in the issues of *Harper's Weekly* in which they appear, highlighting the importance of their message that African-Americans were an unwanted presence at an event that served to solidify America's national identity. To date, there has not been an analysis of the anomalous Johnson family series and its unique function in the context of *Harper's Weekly*.

The Johnson Family series published from July 15 to November 11, 1893 depicts Mr. and Mrs. Johnson, a former slave and his wife, and their son Peter, touring the World's Columbian Exposition. The cartoons provide insight into some of the social anxieties of white Americans with regard to the presence of African-Americans at the exposition. They also explore white American fears of racial and economic diversity through the antics of the imaginary yet symbolically representative Johnson family.

During the World's Columbian Exposition, the world turned to Chicago as a resource to explore the national leadership and social progress of America, and the popular press dedicated many feature stories and illustrations to the ongoing events of the fair. In this context *Harper's Weekly's* presentation of the Johnson family cartoons functioned in three key ways. First, the cartoons were part of a larger national effort to "fix" unstable categories of race as the potential for black economic opportunities and social equity increased. As illustrations of the inappropriate presence and ridiculous behavior of African-Americans,

the series instructed white readers on how to be white Americans and how to easily identify behavior that was different and essentially “black.” The firm establishment of these racial categories was particularly crucial to the formalization of segregation in the 1890s. As historian Grace Elizabeth Hale explains,

Whites created the culture of segregation in large part to counter black success, to make a myth of absolute racial difference, to stop the rising. Racial essentialism, the conception of sets of personal characteristics as biologically determined racial identities, grew in popularity among whites in tandem with the rise of the new black middle class and its increasing visibility, especially in cities.¹

Racial difference justified segregation and protected the freedoms that white supremacists enjoyed. Beyond the slave-based cultural economy, racial lines of difference had to be established to maintain the social order. As Mark M. Smith states, “Put simply, many whites worried that blackness was in danger of becoming whiteness.”² Drawing social lines of racial determination provided the sense of safety that whites longed for. Newell’s cartoon series provided visual material to reinforce these lines.

Second, ironically, the Johnson family served as a kind of all-American family. Consisting of a heterosexual couple with a young son, the cartoon depicted a family structure with which many readers could identify. However, this identification was qualified by popular beliefs of racial difference. At the expense of African-American integrity and progress, the cartoon articulated insecurities that many white visitors to the fair may have experienced, and transposed them onto an exaggerated racial other. At the same time, the cartoon positioned white viewers in a level of cultural hierarchy above the African-American family.

Third, through the series white readers could take comfort in the exposition organizers’ efforts to exclude African-American contributions to the exposition. The Johnson Family presented African-Americans as buffoons who could not understand what they encountered at the fair. Published concurrently in *Harper’s Weekly* were drawings and painted illustrations that underscored what many readers believed to be the rightful social function of African-Americans: to fulfill menial service positions. The tension between the coon-like role of the Johnson Family and the representation of real African-American people in supplementary text and pictures constructed the argument that African-Americans should live in servitude rather than be equal participants in the exposition and the ideal America it presented.

AFRICAN-AMERICANS IN CARICATURE

The visual depiction of African-Americans in caricature was not a new phenomenon in 1893. Although African-Americans had been so depicted since the seventeenth century, their distorted representations increased in popularity from the 1830s through the 1850s, when the minstrel show developed in the north to become a popular national art.³ White blackface performers enjoyed “acting black” while barring blacks as performers and participants in public celebrations. This ironic presence and absence of blackness and black

people reveals the schizophrenia of negrophobic and negrophilic attitudes that whites had for blacks as they sought to define the attributes of blacks while blurring the lines of race and class. Media historian Lisa Gitelman explains,

The White construction of minstrelsy's "blackness" possessed inherent contradictions: it played off a contrived sense of authenticity while it also relied upon counterfeiting. The form reinforced racial boundaries by denigrating black Americans, yet it also defiantly transgressed those boundaries for pleasure and profit in what had become marked as a lowbrow, "popular" form of entertainment for the white working class.⁴

The blackface performance was an important formation of the visual economy of blackness that Newell exploits. Like the minstrel show, Newell's caricatures deny African-American cultural contributions and re-inscribe boundaries that protect an unstable white identity.

The fear of black progress in the post-Reconstruction period resurged in the arts through the popularity of racist coon songs, and the visual depiction of black caricatures in *The Johnson Family* served as projections of white male anxieties, just as they had in the minstrel show. Gitelman observes,

Minstrelsy subverted the questions of racial essentialism on which it fed, providing a raucous catharsis for matters that seemed so pressing elsewhere in the American national scene: slavery, abolition, and *Dred Scott* helped form the context and complexion of the minstrel show; *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) would be context for the recorded coon song."⁵

The recorded coon song, a form made popular shortly after the technological development of the phonograph in 1877, was a derivative of the minstrel show. Without the presence of the racially identifiable minstrel performer, the recorded song freed sound as a signifier of blackness causing confusion among white listeners.⁶ Dependence on sound to identify the singer as black could be masked by a white singer who "sounded black." Because of this absence, the visible markers of race became all the more important in the 1890s as the anxieties attendant upon racial confusion increased. The illustrated caricatures of African-Americans such as Newell's *Johnson Family* harken back to the performed caricatures of the minstrel show in order to remove all doubt about the easy recognition of that which is "authentically" black.

Among the minstrel characters, the most popular male types are Jim Crow, Rastus, Tom, buck, Zip Coon, uncle, and Sambo. Newell's depiction of Mr. Johnson as an older African-American man, characterized visually as mostly bald with a fringe of gray hair, exploited the uncle type. The uncle is often well-dressed in a formal uniform, an important attribute for depicting the black male body in a state of perpetual labor in the service of white people. This readiness to serve combined with the age of a man past his prime for hard labor makes the uncle a harmless, one-dimensional, dependable, loyal man. He is disciplined, well-mannered and has a pleasant demeanor.

Like all the fictional black character types, the uncle shares the exaggerated facial feature of oversized lips, often tinted bright pink or red to contrast with the brown of his skin. In addition, his eyes are sometimes shown as large saucer-like circles with the whites visible on the outer edges of the iris. The uncle is also drawn with particularly oversized teeth, an important element since he is frequently depicted with an impossibly large open-mouthed smile. Smiles are an essential feature across character types to show the pleasure with which the slaves work in the service of their owners. The other common expression is a donut-like open-mouthed form used to emphasize shock and surprise in the character, often in response to a new social situation. In his depiction of Mr. Johnson, Newell visualizes each of the ways in which the uncle is characterized.

The most prominent female caricature is the mammy, utilized by Newell for the stereotype of Mrs. Johnson. The mammy is easily recognizable by her large size, dark skin, brightly colored dress with apron and a handkerchief tied around her head. She is a distorted figure of a female house slave. Although thousands of black women were owned by young white charges during slavery, the differences between these real women who served as mammies and the mammy character are striking. Slaves suffered from malnutrition and neither house slaves nor field slaves had much body fat. Actual mammies were thin, drawn, and tired. The mammy character that Newell presents through Mrs. Johnson is large and smiling.

Newell also used the pickaninny character to represent the son Peter Johnson. Recognizable by his or her dirty, unbrushed hair and tattered, filthy clothes, the pickaninny's mischievous behavior is attributed to the supposed natural savagery of children who would, in their native habitat, play with animals in the mythologized jungles of Africa. Pickaninnies are always shown as unsupervised and needing to be tamed, part of a failure of the black family to function cohesively. The humor of visual representations of the pickaninny depends upon the dangerous dilemmas that are created by the figure's curiosity, frequently through depictions of fatal and near fatal incidents with alligators. It is notable that Peter Newell gave Peter Johnson his own first name, perhaps suggesting identification with the young, curious boy spending time with his family. This identification with the child in *The Johnson Family* suggestively foreshadows Newell's later career, which he dedicated to texts and illustrations specifically for children. Indeed, although many children are curious, the history of racial stereotyping through images plays a specific role in the meaning of the Johnson child for Newell's cartoon.

Despite his popular racist and ethnic caricatures, Newell has been remembered largely as a "gentle artist" who created "gentle cartoons."⁷ A popular American illustrator known in the 1880s and 1890s for his work in *Harper's Weekly*, *Monthly*, *Bazaar*, and *Young People* publications, Newell is perhaps best known as the second artist to illustrate Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1901) and *Through the Looking Glass* (1902). Newell's illustrations of the tales are still familiar images of the *Alice* characters today. The characterization of Newell as "gentle" must refer to his later career as a celebrated children's book author and illustrator. This requires one either to ignore the insidious

images he produced of African-Americans or to acknowledge that racist humor was so common and acceptable at the turn of the century that it is hardly worth criticism, even on the part of art and literary historians today. Because of the specifically racist pedagogical function of *The Johnson Family* in the context of the national phenomenon of the World's Columbian Exposition, an exploration of Newell's historically typical racist caricatures is not only appropriate, but long overdue.

LEARNING TO BEHAVE

The Chicago World's Columbian Exposition was organized to construct a narrative of the United States' glorious past in order to boost national morale and patriotism. The celebratory spectacle not only belied the instability of racial categories, but also the shaky political climate in the United States in the 1890s marked by the financial panic of 1893, which contributed to the unease of the working and middle classes who were concerned about the economic stability of their jobs, family, and country. In response to the desperate situation in which many Americans found themselves, the exposition promoted the image of the United States as a united national economic power. To create the illusion of this unity through the fair, the nation's diverse economic, political, and racial makeup was minimized and the reconciliation between the North and the South along racial lines was emphasized. For the fair organizers, recognition of national diversity would have served to blemish the brilliant appearance of the "White City" and complicated the appearance of a unified, Anglo-Saxon manifest destiny. For African-Americans who had survived slavery and had lived to see the passage of the thirteenth amendment a mere thirty years earlier, the proposal to celebrate the glory of the nation presented an intriguing opportunity. However, from the beginning stages of the exposition's organization, fair officials made efforts to exclude African-Americans as participants.⁸

It was important for Northern and Southern white conservatives to maintain the racial and social distance between black and whites at the end of the nineteenth century. In effect this distancing would stabilize racial divisions and curb the potential for black social and economic mobility in the capitalist system. In theory, the free market allowed blacks equal opportunity to participate in the American economic system. However, the need to reestablish white authority in the three decades after the Civil War was manifested in both racial and economic terms.

The Federal distribution of greenbacks during Reconstruction challenged the notion of the natural intrinsic value of American currency coined in silver and gold. This paper money, void of intrinsic material value, caused speculation about its worth and validity in the free market. As Michael O'Malley explains, skepticism about the worth of greenback currency extended to what was considered by some the God-given intelligence of the white race in comparison to the clear barbarism of the black: "Diluting the money supply diluted the nation's blood, and elevating the freedman depreciated the value of whiteness." Indeed, the "resurgent racism of the 1890s was accompanied by a political obsession with gold and silver and the 'intrinsic value of specie.'"⁹ The investment in maintaining essential racial

difference in 1893 was both a social and economic strategy to maintain the hierarchical order upon which the country was founded.

Late nineteenth-century world's expositions and museum exhibitions shared the common goal of enforcing racial hierarchies and acceptable methods of social behavior. Although many world exposition exhibits were designed to amuse, a pedagogical function was always present. In his book *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics*, Tony Bennett addresses the role of private and public exhibition spaces in the mid to late nineteenth century. In the private sphere of the museum, admission was restricted to the social elite. In the public sphere of the world's exposition, civilized behaviors practiced within the bourgeois private sphere could be seen by a wider audience where they would serve to instruct the lower economic classes about forms of behavior expected of the upper class. The subject and object positions were learned literally through practice in the public exhibition setting.

Bennett asserts that the role of the public exhibition was to transform and develop visitors by creating a more inclusive audience and that it created a new public sphere. The exhibition became a space of observation and control "in order that the visitor's body might be taken hold of and be moulded in accordance with the requirements of new norms of public conduct" defined by the social elite.¹⁰ The Newell cartoon illustrates how this was done. In "The Johnson Family in Cairo Street" (Fig. 1), the family explores one of the diversions of the exposition's Midway section in which groups of people from Africa, Asia, the Pacific Islands, and "Old World" Europe were imported to the fairgrounds for display and performance. The Midway functioned as the antithesis of American progress and was the place to witness anthropological differences. In the context of the Midway, Newell presents Mr. and Mrs. Johnson riding a camel in front of the Egyptian exhibit. The caption reads:

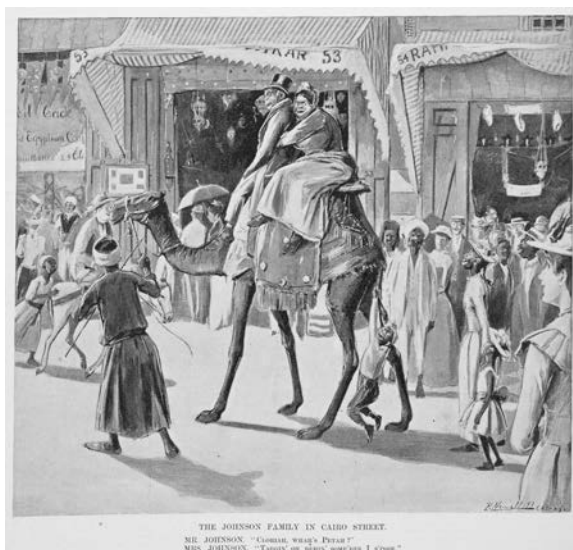


Figure 1:
MR. JOHNSON. "Clorlah [sic], Whah's Petah?"
MRS. JOHNSON. "Taggin' on behin' some'res, I s'pose."

The text is written to emphasize the style of "broken English" that Mr. Johnson speaks. Newell's decision to render his speech phonetically fosters the notion that African-Americans were incapable of speaking or learning grammatically correct English. Matched by the physical distortion of the family, the spelling of the monologue emphasizes racial and cultural difference in such a way as to highlight the family's inferiority through class. Mr. Johnson speaks in a black dialect the way his community speaks, and he is shown as an alien on the exposition grounds, in opposition to the images of civility, progress, and correctness that the exposition organizers strove to promote.

Caught up in the excitement of the Midway, Mr. and Mrs. Johnson have lost their son Peter who, just out of sight, swings mischievously on the camel's tail. Mr. and Mrs. Johnson are presented as irresponsible caretakers for their son and as a result, Peter-as-pickaninny misbehaves. The Johnsons' inability to participate properly in the fair suggests that African-Americans exhibit poor behavior both as parents and children, carelessly breaking the rules of conduct in the public sphere. Simultaneously, the Johnsons become part of the Midway as another exhibit. Their misbehavior demonstrates their racial difference and supposed inferiority, reinforcing the racial hierarchy constructed in the Midway.

Harper's Weekly offered two alternatives for behavior at the exposition. Appearing in the same issue as "The Johnson Family in Cairo Street" is the illustration "Columbian Exposition—How the Crowds Lunch" (Fig. 2) which depicts the only other visual representation of an African-American in the issue. The illustrator offers a collage of six pictures of exposition crowds eating lunch on the fairgrounds. In the largest illustration, picture 3, an African-American man is shown, not as a visitor but as a waiter. Here the artist asserts that the proper place for African-Americans at the fair is serving whites. This waiter's position is echoed in picture 6, in which a Turkish man sells hot kebabs at a sandwich stand. Although they maintain different racial and national identities, these two men share the same role as other in relation to the white identity of the visitors they serve at the fair. Although African-Americans were allowed to work as waiters at the exposition, they also participated as visitors and hosts of exhibits. These multiple positions are not represented in *Harper's Weekly*; instead limited depictions promoted African-Americans in static roles that were already changing at the turn of the century. The lack of diverse imagery to reflect these changes speaks to white concern about social and economic development among African-Americans and the desire to keep them as national others like recent European immigrants.

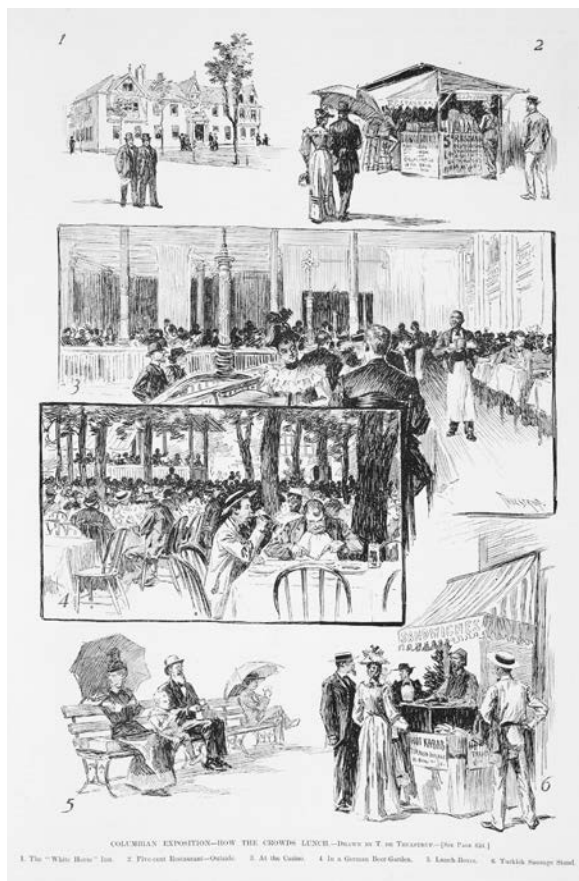


Figure 2. Columbian Exposition—How the Crowds Lunch



Figure 3. Columbian Exposition—In the Cairo Street, Midway Plaisance.

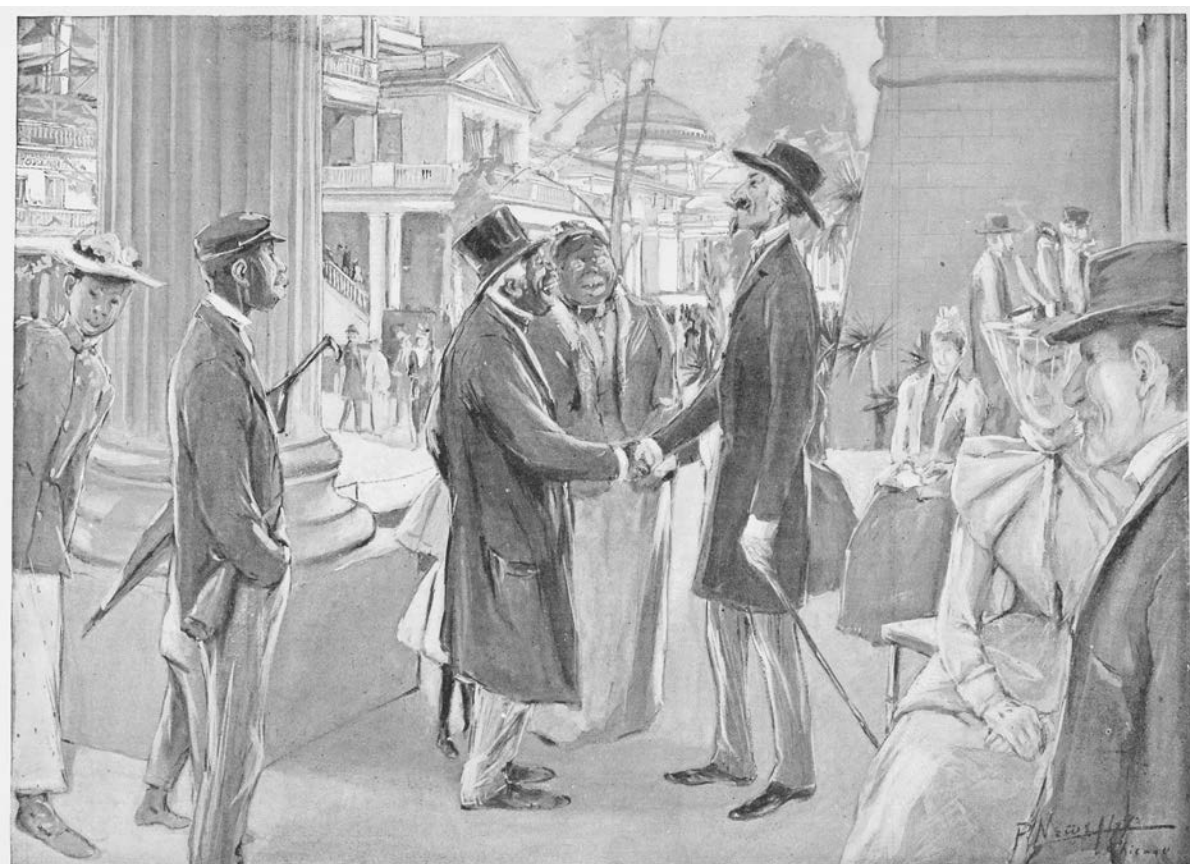
visitors of other racial groups and economic classes. Readers could easily compare the two depictions of camel riding—one presented as ridiculous spectacle, the other as exemplary model—and choose which one to follow.

A second illustration offers another example of proper behavior at the exposition. On the cover of the September 16, 1893 issue of *Harper's Weekly*, the painting “Columbian Exposition—In the Cairo Street, Midway Plaisance” (Fig. 3) depicts two white women riding a camel. The women appear calm as the camel is led gracefully by an elegant Egyptian man. Although there are crowds of people around the couple, few watch the women go by. The couple embodies appropriate behavior at the fair and thus does not warrant attention or scrutiny by other fairgoers. Their clothing is more elaborate than Mrs. Johnson’s, indicating that they are of a higher economic standing. The stylish couple provides an example of how visitors should dress and act while experiencing the exotic displays of the Midway. Because they are part of the middle class, they function as a model for

Through Newell’s cartoons, the diversity of African-Americans in Chicago is reduced to spectacle, to a type of visitor who is unable to comprehend what the exposition has to offer. By contrast, in his book, *All the World Is Here!: The Black Presence in White City*, historian Christopher Robert Reed discusses the various roles of African-Americans in the public sphere of the Chicago exposition. Diverse groups of African-Americans looked forward to the fair for different reasons. For students hosting the exhibits of Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute and Atlanta University, the fair provided the opportunity to feature accomplishments in black education. Leaders such as emigrationists Reverend Alexander Crummel and Bishop Henry McNeal Turner looked forward to discussing their agendas of black freedom in Africa. Working class blacks looked to the fair as an employment opportunity and a place for learning and entertainment.¹¹ However, in Newell’s imagination, the Johnson family is unaware of these struggles for cultural representation in the fair. Disengaged from the political aspects of the event and left behind in the progressive vision that the fair represents, the family goes through the exposition shocked, surprised, and displaced. The cartoon naturalizes their incompatibility with the fair and with the world at large.

KNOWING ONE'S PLACE

The Johnsons' appearance at the fair demonstrates the gap between national white idealism for American progress and the myth that blacks inherently occupy a static primitive space that cannot be changed. In the penultimate cartoon of the series, "Columbian Exposition—The Johnson Family Rest at the Kentucky State Building," Mr. Johnson sees his former master (Fig. 4). Sitting in the foreground of the cartoon is a wealthy white couple who look at the Johnson family with smirks on their faces. In the background is another white woman who looks at the Johnson family and smiles. In the center of the cartoon, a white colonel shakes Mr. Johnson's hand. Mrs. Johnson stands beside her husband and stares wide-eyed directly at the colonel's face. Behind Mr. Johnson are two other figures, an African-American man and an African-American woman who peeks into the frame and looks at the reader. The text reads:



COLUMBIAN EXPOSITION—THE JOHNSON FAMILY REST AT THE KENTUCKY STATE BUILDING.
THE COLONEL (*Mr. Johnson's former master*). "Well, well, Ez, what ah you doin' heah?"
MR. JOHNSON. "Wal, sah, I's lak a nole shoe dat's been blacked--'bout time I's gittin' some polish!"

Figure 4.

THE COLONEL: (Mr. Johnson's former master). "Well, well, Ez, what ah you doin' heah?"

MR. JOHNSON: "Wal, sah, I's lak a nole shoe dat's been black'd--'bout time I's gittin some polish!"

Newell's emphasis on racial difference is evident in the dialogue between the colonel and Mr. Johnson. Both men start their conversation with the same word, but the different spelling of that word distinguishes Mr. Johnson as speaking in a black dialect and his white rural counterpart as speaking with a moneyed Southern drawl. Like his presence at the fair, Mr. Johnson's language is a poor imitation of his former master's. This important

distinction highlights the difference between the supposed racial inferiority of blacks and uneducated white “country bumpkins” or recent European immigrants who were also subjected to ethnic caricature in the late nineteenth century for foreign and antiquated cultural differences.

This peculiar cartoon asserts the instructional and transformational function of the public sphere. The Johnson family comes to the exposition to become part of the national public as African-Americans. In this new public sphere, Mr. Johnson can shake hands with his former master as if they were equal, yet the exaggerated manner in which the family is portrayed and the language used to articulate Mr. Johnson’s thoughts maintain that he is still considered inferior. For the reader, this portrayal secures black inferiority within the ideology of the public sphere.

At the same time, Newell recognizes a desire for social progress and respect within African-American culture during the late nineteenth century. Mr. Johnson explains that he is attending the fair to take advantage of the opportunity to experience the exposition and all that it has to offer. He describes his attendance at the fair through the metaphor of an old shoe blackened with polish, needing to be buffed and made presentable. Mr. Johnson’s desire to transform himself through cultural exposure is recognized in this cartoon. Ironically, the polishing process of attending the fair makes him blacker. The function of the cartoon is to define Mr. Johnson’s blackness as dysfunctional and coon-like in opposition to the refined manner that defines whiteness. The image presents a duality by depicting the family as misfit visitors at the fair yet humorously showing their intentions as understandable even if insufficient and unacceptable.

A revealing part of the cartoon’s composition is the placement of the white American woman sitting beside the well-dressed man and the African-American woman who leans into the border of the picture frame. The composition of the cartoon separates the races—the left side contains the African-Americans and the right side contains the white Americans—forcing a comparison of their positions. On one side, the white couple rests together on a bench staring smugly at the black family. On the other side, the African-American woman stands isolated. She looks much less secure in her position as she leans into the picture and stares at us with curiosity. This contrast between security on one side and insecurity on the other raises the question of social status in the public sphere. The characters’ visual representations reflect their social positions through race and class. African-Americans stand in a precarious position connected to whites through the legacy of slavery; in this cartoon, Newell depicts the white characters enjoying a more comfortable position at the fair. The white women are seated while Mrs. Johnson stands. They look condescendingly at the Johnsons as they sit with their hands folded in their laps. The social distance between the Johnson family and white Americans is made clear compositionally, showing that the basis of their amicable relationship is African-American subservience. The possibility of African-American independence from the slave-master relationship becomes a source of amusement.

As a traditional family unit, the Johnsons mirror the familial structure in which many readers participated. At some level readers had to identify with the family in order to learn lessons from them. Through this identification, readers could relate to the family roles of father, mother, and child, and begin to transform themselves into acceptable members of the public sphere. In this way, the Johnsons are a typical American family of their time performing the anxieties of the American fairgoer through the cartoon series regardless of race, and yet their caricatured appearance forces the reader to regard their race.

The choice of creating an African-American family to act out the racial and class anxieties of the average fairgoer re-inscribed African-Americans' marginal social position by removing evidence of African-American mobility at the turn of the century. The possibility of learning from the family's wrongdoings fulfilled the pedagogical function of teaching readers to distance themselves from the backward behavior of African-Americans and instead become part of the new public sphere. As a result, The Johnson Family precludes African-Americans' ability to use the public sphere as a way to reinvent and re-present their popular image. The caricature of blackness satirized the potential for transformation and reinforced that African-Americans were inherently inferior.

THE JOHNSON FAMILY: RACIAL INFERIORITY, LABOR, AND THE SEARCH FOR LOCATION

Although black men's employment opportunities at the exposition were limited, they took advantage of positions that were made available. Their labor goes unacknowledged in The Johnson Family cartoons. Commenting on the evidence of black laborers in exposition photographs, Reed writes,

The importance of this is found in the fact that, given the racism of the day, these employees could have been excluded or hidden, but were not. They are featured as integral parts of the organizations, appearing dignified and representing neither themselves nor their race in a derogatory fashion.¹²

Likewise, the acknowledgment of black labor was an important criticism of the representation of blacks at the fair in activist and author Ida B. Wells' preface to *The Reason Why the Colored American Is Not in the Columbian Exposition*,

The labor of one-half of this country has always been, and is still being done by [African-Americans]. The first credit this country had in its commerce with foreign nations was created by production resulting from their labor. The wealth created by their industry has afforded to the white people of this country the leisure essential to their group progress in education, art, science, industry, and invention.¹³

In contrast to historical contributions of labor by African-Americans, the possibility of black labor in the exposition is marginalized through the Johnson Family and depicted as comic spectacle.

In the first cartoon of the series, “The Johnson Family Visit the Great White City” (Fig. 5), Mr. Johnson stands in front of his family with an exaggerated pose and a look of shock on his face. Typical of nineteenth-century caricature of African-Americans, Mr. and Mrs. Johnson’s eyes bulge. Mr. Johnson’s large mouth is open wide enough to form a complete circle. The family looks lost, confused, and in awe of their surroundings. To the right of the family, a white man dressed in an official Columbian Guard uniform and a white man visiting the fair look at the family and laugh.

The overwhelming effect that the exposition environment has on the family is a mix of fact and fiction. Many visitors, African-American and not, were in awe of the exposition architecture and design. Readers may have identified with the family’s amazed reaction. However, because of the family’s caricatured appearance and the laughter they elicit from onlookers, readers may have also found humor through a sense of superiority over the family. The accompanying caption emphasizes the Johnsons’ misfit presence at the exposition:

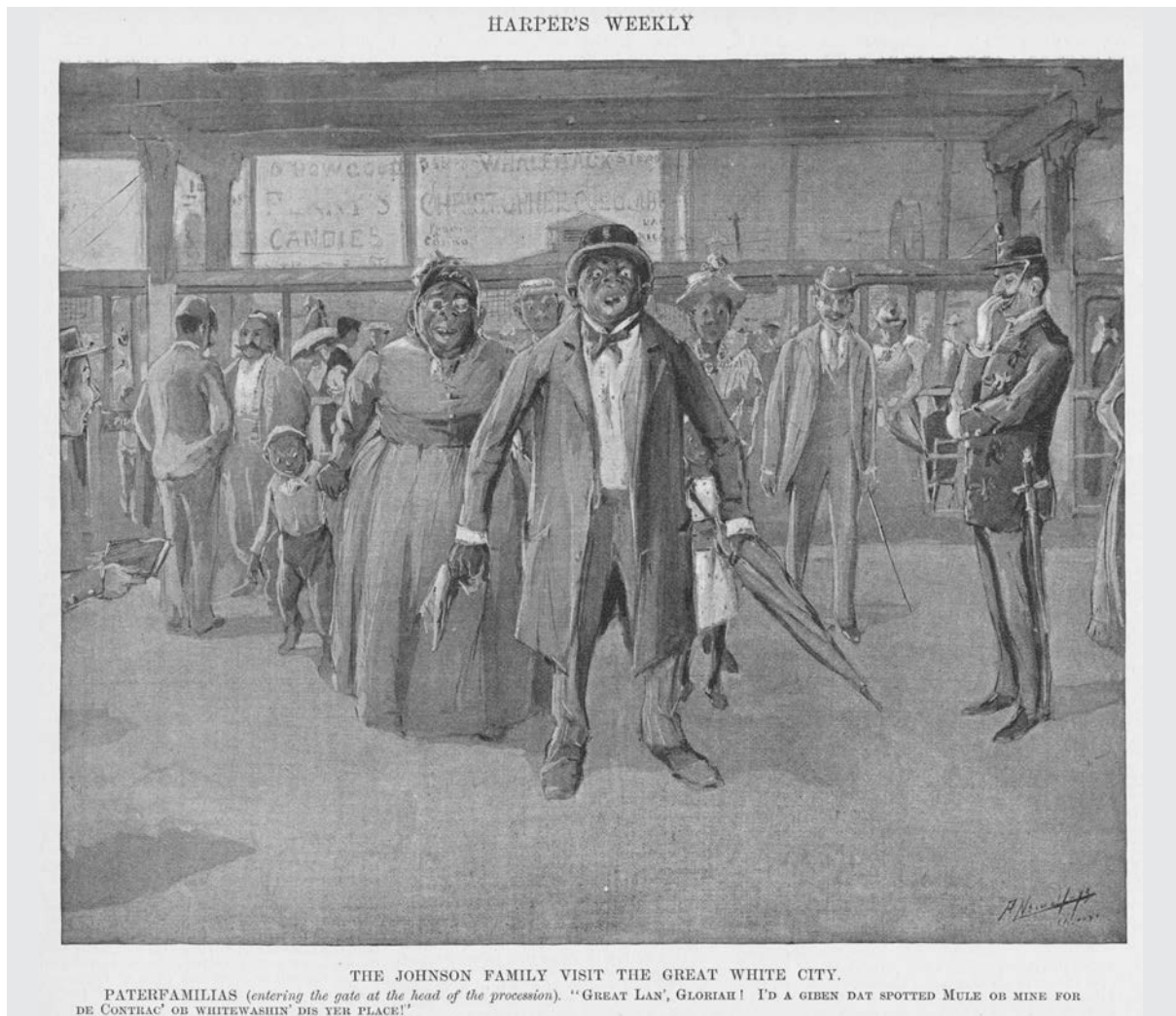


Figure 5. PATERFAMILIAS (entering the gate at the head of the procession). “Great Lan’, Gloriah! I’d a giben dat spotted Mule ob mine for de Contrac’ ob whitewashin’ dis yer place!”

In this cartoon, Mr. Johnson vocalizes his desire to be a part of the construction of the fair. The offer of a spotted mule that he would have traded for the painting contract would be worthless on the scale of the exposition's budget, yet of value to the Johnson family's economic situation. The reference to the mule presents Mr. Johnson as unable to understand the exposition's environment because his working class status in America as a former slave is so far removed from the grandeur of America constructed by the fair.

The laughing white visitor and the Columbian Guard may find humor in the possibility that an African-American man could be a businessman managing the contract for such an enormous project. Or, they may be amused by the thought of Mr. Johnson in the position of painter at the exposition. What is denied in this Johnson family encounter is the labor that African-American men did contribute to the construction of the fair. The incompatibility of the Johnson family with the exposition contradicts the real presence of African-Americans on the fairgrounds. Although the exposition's hierarchy of labor excluded African-American men as painters, they were part of the construction team with white men who cleared and prepared the grounds for the erection of buildings and created the extensive ornamental plasterwork on the rooftops and friezes of the neo-classical exhibition buildings.¹⁴



Figure 6. C.D. Arnold, Architectural Relief Construction Crew.

In a construction photograph by official exposition photographer C.D. Arnold, an African-American worker is clearly visible. On the far right side of the photograph, a white man is depicted supervising the construction of a relief molding by a crew of exposition employees (Fig. 6). In the center, a white man gracefully poses to present a completed relief panel. In front of him two white male workers focus on their tasks. Immediately to the left of this central figure is a young African-American man working alongside a white man.

The position of Columbian Guard filled by the uniformed man laughing at Mr. Johnson was another employment opportunity kept out of reach of African-Americans. The guard's laughter is an affront to Mr. Johnson's hopes for employment and a reminder to the Johnson family, and *Harper's Weekly* readers, that America's tradition of racial discrimination will be kept in place despite the celebration of progress in White City. Ignoring African-Americans' participation as part of the exposition's construction helped to enforce the invisibility of African-Americans not only as contributors to the fair but also on a larger scale as contributors to the progress of the nation.

CONCLUSION

Humorous stereotypes illustrated in The Johnson Family series easily pervaded popular culture to make the exposition a stage for the clash between savagery and civility and progress and regression. Perhaps the Johnson family's misadventures created discomfort for typical white readers, who may have reflected impulsively on their own undesirable behaviors that cause others to laugh. However, the figures' visually caricatured appearance would also have reassured these nineteenth-century readers that they were not like the Johnson family.

For some African-American readers, The Johnson Family may have reinforced the urgent need to have a choice of images representing black America. For others, it may have smugly secured their own positions as part of a burgeoning African-American upper class. For this emerging class, The Johnson Family clarified their rise away from economically poor blacks and distinguished them as socially mobile. On a popular level, The Johnson Family helped define common misconceptions of black identity by depicting the African-American family as incapable of joining and participating in national progress. Represented through the lens of contemporary misguided notions about race, the cartoon supported the impossibility of African-American equality on the grounds of both biological determinism and social ineptness. This resistance to understanding cultural difference and the contributions of African-Americans guaranteed the truth of W.E.B. DuBois' 1903 prediction that the problem of the twentieth century would be the problem of the color line. It also solidified the future of African-American challenges to white American superiority in the new public sphere.

¹Grace Elizabeth Hale, *Making Whiteness: The Culture of Segregation in the South, 1890-1940* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1999), 21.

²Mark M. Smith, *How Race is Made: Slavery, Segregation, and the Senses* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 7.

³Eric Lott, *Love and Theft: Blackface Minstrelsy and the American Working Class* (London: Oxford Press, 1995), 6.

⁴Lisa Gitelman, *Scripts, Grooves, and Writing Machines: Representing Technology in the Edison Era* (Stanford University Press: Stanford, 1999), 133.

⁵ibid.

⁶Gitelman, 133-137.

⁷Lewis Carroll, Martin Gardner, and Peter Newell in *More Annotated Alice: Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and Through the Looking Glass and What Alice Found There* (New York: Random House, 1990), xxiv and xxi.

⁸See, Christopher Robert Reed in "*All the World is Here!*": *The Black Presence in White City* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2000), 58; and the complete thirty page version of this essay in *Patterns of Prejudice*, Vol. 41, No. 5, 2007: 435-465.

⁹Michael O'Malley, "Specie and Species: Race and the Money Question in Nineteenth-Century America" *The American Historical Review* 99 (April 1994): 381 and 373.

¹⁰Tony Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), 24

¹¹See Reed, Chapter 1 "Expectations," 3-20.

¹²Reed, 73.

¹³Ida B. Wells, Frederick Douglass, Irvine Garland Penn, and Ferdinand L. Barnett, *The Reason Why the Colored American Is Not in the World's Columbian Exposition: The Afro-American's Contribution to Columbian Literature* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999 reprint of 1893 pamphlet), unnumbered page in preface.

¹⁴Reed, 58.

IMAGE CREDITS

1-5. Research Center, Chicago History Museum.

6. Chicago Public Library, Special Collections and Preservation Division.

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2.3.

Staging Gentility at the Columbian Exposition: Masculinity on and off the Midway

Constance Crompton

When boxer James “Gentleman Jim” Corbett and strongman Eugen Sandow met in a fashionable New York restaurant in March of 1894 they nearly came to blows. As Corbett told the *New York World*, if Sandow “had been in any pugnacious mood the chances are that he would have had his head knocked off.”¹ The animosity between the two men was the culmination of their use of competing discourses of race, sex, class, and science, in the production of the meaning of white middle-class men’s muscles in Chicago during the Columbian Exposition in the preceding year. Sandow, whose well-defined muscles and sculpted physique set him apart from the more oafish boxers and weightlifters of the day, was at the center of a discursive shift that moved muscularity from the freakishness of a sideshow attraction to the central and necessary sign of masculinity for every white middle-class man. This shift is dramatized by Sandow and Corbett’s performances in Chicago during the Columbian Exposition.

The Columbian Exposition was meant to celebrate American and global achievements in industry and art, but it also served to display models of manhood to a national and international audience. The fair itself ran from May 1 to October 31, 1893, and marked the close of an era, as defined at the American Historical Association Meeting that ran in conjunction with the fair by historian Frederick Jackson Turner. On July 13, 1893 he presented fellow historians with his thesis that the frontier had once shaped the national character through its capacity to expand ever westward, but that conditions that built that character were vanishing. Situating the closing of the frontier in the context of the Columbian conquest he concluded that “now, four centuries from the discovery of America, at the end of a hundred years of life under the Constitution, the frontier has gone, and with its going has closed the first period of American history.”² Turner declared the frontier closed, but did not leave his audience with an alternative sphere to concentrate the growth and industry that he thought were characteristic of the American spirit, but instead suggested that “the American energy will continually demand a wider field for its exercise.”³ As the frontier was closed the national gaze turned inward. Every corner of that nation had been explored. Bounded in space, the nation’s products, bodies, and culture were left to be examined, showcased at the Exposition alongside comparable artifacts from around the world. On the frontier white men’s muscles had been essential for proverbial hewing

wood and hauling water; in a nation with no frontier, the meaning of those muscles had to be recast. On the Columbian Exposition Midway and off men's bodies were exhibited, offering competing visions of what male muscles meant in contemporary culture. The shows that featured Eugen Sandow (The Strongest Man on Earth) and James "Gentleman Jim" Corbett serve as case studies of white masculinity on display in and around the Columbian Exposition provide insight into how white men might re-imagine their bodies in an age when the frontier was closed, technologies of vision proliferated, and men's muscles moved from being functional to being aesthetic.

The racially charged visual spectacle of the Midway provided the backdrop for Sandow's and Corbett's assertions about the relationship between gentility and muscularity attendant on the strong male body. According to the Minneapolis *Penny Paper's* account from 1895, the two men invited a comparison of their physiques and strength, although Sandow, "the strong man, while repudiating with indignation the idea of coupling him with prizefighters, yet claimed that if he should fight Corbett, he could literally break the man in two."⁴ Sandow's suggestion let him distance himself from *prizefighting*, the illicit commercial boxing for which Corbett was famous. The suggestion got a rise out of Corbett, who "told [Sandow] the [he] could whip him through and through at any time and in any place he might set," and considered Sandow's "slurs to [his] profession as an insult to [Corbett himself]."⁵ The two men never did take to the ring. The meaning of their bodies had already been set: their sparring, which discursively pitched one ersatz-gentleman's science of the body against another, took place in and around the Columbian Exposition Midway in the summer of 1893.

CONTEXTS FOR WHITE MIDDLE-CLASS MALE BODIES

The World's Columbian Exposition was held between May and October 1893 at the purpose-built White City in Jackson Park on the southeast end of Chicago. Modeled on London's Great Exhibition of 1851, the World's Columbian Exposition boasted exhibits of innovations in agriculture, machinery, fine arts and manufacturing. Many of the states sponsored purpose-built buildings to exhibit their wildlife, culture, and industry. The fair centered around the Court of Honor, a series of buildings ranged around the Great Basin, an artificial lake. The exposition's most important exhibition spaces—those devoted to Agriculture, Machinery, Administration, Mines, Manufactures and Liberal Art—ringed the edges of the lake. Open by day and into the evening, the Court of Honor was illuminated by electric light, which reflected up off the water—outdoor electric light was a novel sight to visitors from Chicago and the rest of the country.⁶ In addition to industrial and geographic divisions, the buildings were also divided by sex: located between the Court of Honor and the Midway Plaisance, the Woman's Building occupied a liminal space just outside the Court of Honor.

The bounded nature of women's involvement in the fair invites the investigation of the remaining, non-feminized spaces. The Columbian Exposition was the first World's Fair to have a building dedicated solely to women.⁷ It may be tempting to describe this as the only gendered space at the fair, however, the Woman's Building suggests that

everything that was not in that building must have been the province of men. Although mainstream masculinity, and the white male body, are generally read as a stand-in for humanity in general,⁸ and are often therefore culturally invisible or beyond comment, the abundance of visualist technologies at the fair invite the cultural historian to *look* at men's culturally inconspicuous expressions of gender, rather than focus solely on women as bearers of gender.

White middle-class men's achievements were also thrown into relief by contrast to depictions of non-white Americans. The fair had a separate space to display women's achievements, but the national venue for displaying talent along that other great conceptual marker, race, was defined by time not by space. There was no building or pavilion dedicated to African American achievements. The compromise between having an African American building and ignoring African Americans all together was Colored Peoples Day, held on August 25, 1893. While prominent activist Frederick Douglass argued that fellow African Americans should partake in the day, Ida B. Wells, another great social reformer, argued that Colored Peoples Day was too pejorative to warrant participation. With the exception of Colored Peoples Day the official representations of non-white people were limited to national or anthropological contexts, as in the case of the buildings sponsored by Japan, Turkey, Siam, and Guatemala, and by the Chinese markets, Arab bazaars and Samoan, Sudanese, and Dahomey villages on the Midway. While the former contained racialized difference in demarcated exhibition space, the Midway sexualized racial difference, using rivalry over women's affections to veil disputes over racial superiority.

Fair-goers could experience a new set of technologies, specifically electric light and moving images, that helped focus their attention on the body. Individual inventors, such as George Westinghouse and Thomas Edison, were as much showmen at the fair as they were inventors. Their personalities as well as products were on display. Westinghouse had won the bid to electrify the fair, and spent much of the summer of 1893 at the exposition extolling the virtues of alternating current. Although Thomas Edison's General Electric Company, which championed direct current, did not power the fair, Edison himself was in attendance. He was exhibiting the kinoscope, an early film technology which predates projected film. The kinoscopic mechanism was housed in a wooden casing eight inches wide and standing roughly four feet tall, with a binocular eyepiece at one end of the top of the casing that allowed one person to peer into the machine at a time. Films depicting people were exceedingly popular. The kinoscope film was fed vertically under the eyepiece at roughly forty frames per second, putting the moving body on display as it had never been seen before.⁹

The kinoscope had many features in common with European moving image technology, such as the zoopraxiscope (which was on display on the Midway) the electrical tachyscope, and the phonoscope. The kinoscope's success over these continental technologies had as much to do with Edison's financial clout as with his innovation.¹⁰ From its inception

Edison's kinetographic subject matter, which assumed a male audience, was reminiscent of the Midway performances, those which made up unofficial, if popular, cultural expression at the fair. In addition to films of vaudeville actresses performing suggestive dances in such films as *Annabelle* [sic] *Serpentine Dance* and *Dance De Ventre*, which Edison would record in the following year, he also turned the male subjects on display in Chicago into kinetographic subjects with *Corbett and Courtney Before the Kinetograph* (1894) and *Sandow* (1894), bringing Sandow, the strongman, and Corbett, the boxer, into competition for kinetoscopic viewers' attention. Edison's choice of film subject tells us which male bodies the paying public wanted to see. The films of Corbett and Sandow let images of the men's white, moving, and—as an effect of the kinetoscope—near luminescent bodies, circulate without their actual presence. In the summer of 1893, however, anyone who wanted to see Corbett or Sandow had to come to Chicago to see them in person.

While the exposition featured products of industry and the arts, the Midway featured those other cultural products: gendered bodies (Fig. 1). The Midway offered a wide range of bodies on display. One peep show, advertised as a nudist colony, was only visible through a hole at shoulder height. Visitors who paid to peep were actually looking in at a mirror and were greeted with a reflection of their own head perched on a painting of a cleverly unrevealing nude male body.¹¹ In the Midway's Zoopraxographic Hall [sic] Eadweard Muybridge exhibited his zoopraxiscopic discs which were printed with still images of animals captured at timed intervals. When spun the discs made the animals appear to move. Muybridge did not, however, limit himself to animals. His zoopraxiscopic discs of men wrestling were equally popular.¹² Another Midway performer who would later become famous for his physical feats, Ehrich Weiss, was testing out his new stage name, Harry Houdini.¹³

Annie Oakley, who would also feature in an eponymous Edison film in 1894, was in Chicago with William "Buffalo Bill" Cody that summer. The reception and content of Buffalo Bill's show underscores the changing role of the American male body. While Buffalo Bill's show had been popular at the 1889 World Fair in Paris, he was excluded from the official Columbian Exposition program. However, Cody and his Congress of Rough Riders were a staple adjoining the Midway.¹⁴ Cody's Wild West had displayed indigenous people wildly out of context, mixing the visual markers that signaled tribal difference. The Rough Riders continued in the same vein, featuring simultaneous performances by Russian, Turkish, and Roma riders. Horsemanship certainly required skill and strength, but the Rough Riders' status as a spectacle underscored the irrelevance of horseback riding to urban men. Physical strength was inessential in the modern middle-class work place, which brought the purpose and meaning of male muscle into question. The frontier was closed, and Cody provided a cap to that closure by turning the west into a spectacle to be displayed to the tourists at the Exposition Midway.



Figure 1. The Columbian Exposition Midway.

Enjoyment of the Exposition and Midway was not limited to people who could travel to Chicago. Those who could not take in the exposition first hand, or who wanted to commemorate their visit with images that they could enjoy at home, had the option of buying one of the many souvenir guidebooks. These books, such as *Official Views of the World's Columbian Exposition*, which included photographs taken by Harlow Higinbotham, president of the exposition's directors, served to spread the racial and gendered orthodoxy of the exposition beyond Jackson Park. *Official Views* takes readers on a virtual walking tour of the exposition. According to *Official Views* architecture is the central point of interest to the virtual visitor. The majority of the volume is dedicated to photographs of buildings: the Court of Honor, the Manufactures and Liberal Arts Building, the Transportation Building, the Mines Building. In the foreground of these images white visitors mill about, they, like the readers, are spectators. It is only in the final 23 of the guidebook's 115 plates, dedicated to views of the Midway, that people are posed as representations of the displays, rather than as spectators. Two Middle Eastern men and a camel represent "Types of the Arabian Village" and three men and five women pose beside a traditional fale or house, in "The Samoan Village—On the Midway" (Fig. 2). These were not the only "Types" on the Midway: it boasted model Irish, Viennese, Sudanese, Dahomey, and Chinese villages, a "Moorish Palace," as well as Indian and Japanese bazaars. Billed as an exhibit devoted to national costumes, the Midway also featured "The World Congress of Beauty: 40 Ladies from 40 Nations." White middle-class men appear in *Official Views*, but they are spectators in the foreground. The *Official Views* photographs confirm Robert Rydell's assertion that the fair's central mission was to win "the support of white Americans, regardless of social class, for a view of the world that held that progress toward civilization could be understood in terms of allegedly innate racial characteristics."¹⁵ Whiteness is not outside this racialized economy, but is cast as default for humanity, as though the white onlookers in the *Official Views* photographs had no racial particularity worthy of note.



Figure 2. Types of the Arabian Village.

IN THIS CORNER: JAMES CORBETT

One of the Midway's most popular entertainments was a daily demonstration of the self-styled "scientific boxing method" by heavyweight champion James Corbett (Fig. 3). Spectators could gather at the Midway's Natatorium café or the Old Vienna restaurant and watch Corbett, who performed in nothing more than shorts,

boots, and the newly significant boxing gloves, while pummeling a man-sized punching bag. A popular performer on stage as well as in the ring, Corbett's audience would have read Corbett through the legal status of his profession and, with the Samoan, Sudanese, and Irish villages as a backdrop, through the specter of racial dominance that haunted boxing as white and non-white men sparred for the world heavyweight championship.

James "Gentleman Jim" Corbett positioned himself as genteel. Unlike bare-knuckle boxers or catch-as-catch-can wrestlers, he was a gentleman, a claim he substantiated through the careful rhetorical framing of his background and his boxing methods. Born in 1866, Corbett was raised in San Francisco, a frontier city shaped by the gold rush. Expelled at age 16 from Sacred Heart College due to a fight with a fellow student, he nevertheless used his brief enrolment in college as a platform on which to build his gentlemanly persona. Even though between 1872 and 1882 the number of students enrolled in post-secondary education increased from 32,000 to 64,000, college students only made up one percent of the population.¹⁶ Since so few men had post-secondary education, Corbett's stint at Sacred Heart was a distinguishing marker of class status. He was a gentleman, slumming amongst the prizefighters.

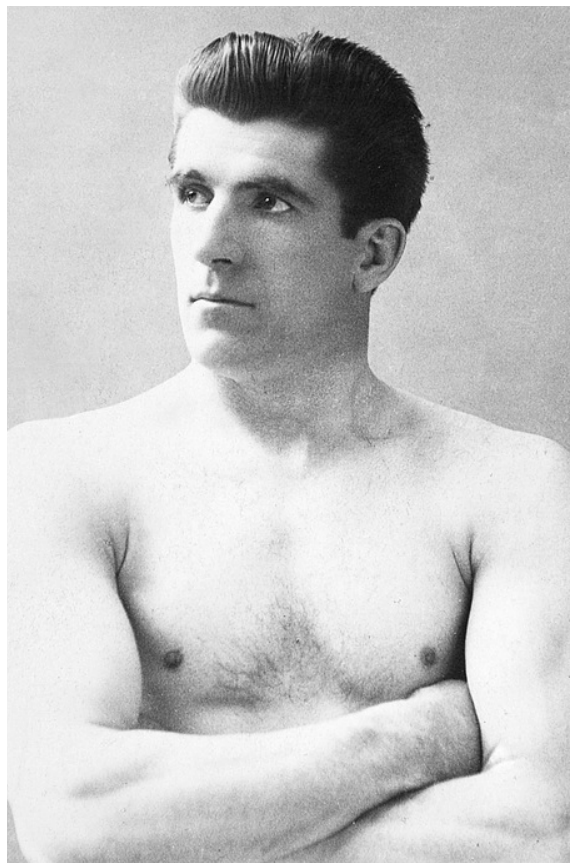


Figure 3. James "Gentleman Jim" Corbett.

Corbett's boxing career provides a frame of reference for the meaning of the strong white male body in the years leading up to the Columbian Exposition. Corbett spent his late teens and early twenties boxing in California, where, as in most states, prizefighting was illegal, although rarely prosecuted. Even though they were illegal, prizefights were governed by rules, determined at the start of the match, in order to prevent disagreements about the length of each round or the permissibility of scratching or biting. In 1891 Corbett traveled to San Francisco to fight Peter Jackson, a black boxer from Australia. The bare-knuckle boxer and reigning heavyweight John L. Sullivan had repeatedly refused to fight Jackson in the preceding three years, for fear that the title might pass from a white boxer to a black boxer. Corbett and Jackson's 61-round match dramatized racial tensions without conclusion—the match terminated with a draw. Corbett's use of his strong male body to fight was overlaid with racial meaning and was heavily regulated, even sanctioned.

John L. Sullivan was not reluctant to take on white pugilists. However, the Sullivan-Corbett fight, which Corbett won, took Sullivan, a bare-knuckle boxer, out of his element. This match was the first world-championship match to adhere to the Queensberry rules, which relied on dress and style to make the sport seem less like brawling.¹⁷ The Sullivan-Corbett fight made American boxing seem gentlemanly, since it required professional equipment and expertise, and drew its official regulations from an aristocratic lineage. The press set Corbett's win in classed terms: the educated "Gentleman Jim" had defeated the working-class Sullivan. While "stories of [Sullivan's] excessive drinking and brawling appeared frequently in newspapers," Corbett's private life was above reproach.¹⁸ Corbett's speed and "unaggressive tactics" inside the ropes made him popular as "the most scientific and agile heavy-weight pugilist ever seen in the ring."¹⁹

Corbett did not display classed masculinity solely in the ring; his theatre career prepared audiences to read his boxing demonstrations, like the ones he gave at the exposition, as performances of masculinity. The vaudeville stage had given Corbett a venue to publicly taunt John L. Sullivan into a match. In the fall of 1892, less than a year before the World's Fair opened in Chicago, Corbett toured with a purpose-written play about a struggling young boxer, *Gentleman Jack*.²⁰ An expensive production, *Gentleman Jack* featured over 100 actors including comedians and dancers.²¹ The public was interested in watching Corbett: the play itself was well received in the United States and England²² and in most states, nebulously defined boxing exhibitions or demonstrations like the ones Corbett held at the Chicago World's Fair Midway were legal and popular.²³ Corbett, who toured the country during his twenties and thirties, had an exceedingly long career as a prizefighter and demonstration boxer. He would not lose the title until a match in 1897; at the Exposition in 1893 he was in peak form.

Despite his initial popularity Corbett's two Midway performances—vaudeville shows and boxing demonstrations—were ultimately distasteful to Chicago's better element. Corbett was under contract with the company that ran the Natatorium, a café with an adjoining gymnasium that took its name from the swimming pool it contained. Corbett performed in the café with his own vaudeville troupe. Despite early accolades from the press, suggesting that Corbett and "his clever company [would] prove one of the greatest features on the Midway plaisance,"²⁴ by the end of July he was asked by the fair's directors to leave. The incident attracted some national attention. According to *The Morning Oregonian* an official complained that the "fair is intended as educational for all peoples. All the villages and industries in [the] Midway Plaisance are interesting and instructive, Corbett is anything but instructive. I don't think his performance tends to elevate. I don't object to his vaudeville show, but I will not tolerate his fighting."²⁵ Although competition between men was acceptable, in order to fit within the strictures of middle-class masculinity any competition had to be genteel. The inability of boxing, even under the Queensberry rules, to "elevate"

onlookers signals the failure of Corbett's attempt to frame boxing as scientific and genteel. In a final face-saving measure, he publicly requested that Dr. Harlow Higinbotham, president of the directory of the fair, clear his name: in a letter published in *The Daily Inter Ocean* he asked Higinbotham "whether in any respect [he, Corbett, had] during the course of [his] engagement upon the grounds acted other than in a manner becoming a gentleman." Higinbotham replied that "it has not come to [his] knowledge that during [Corbett's] engagement with the Natatorium company [Corbett had] at any time deported [himself] in any particular that reflects discredit upon the World's Columbian Exposition or [Corbett himself]."²⁶ His public reassurance notwithstanding, Higinbotham still asked Corbett to leave by July 29, 1893, several months before the fair's closure on October 28th.

It is not clear whether Corbett's boxing demonstrations, his history of prizefighting, or the salacious content of his vaudeville show caused his dismissal from the Midway. The apocryphal popular account of his dismissal, however, reveals how white masculinity was sexualized in the setting provided by the Plaisance's ethnic villages and bazaars. The racial and commercial content of the Midway was shaped by two men: Isaac Ben Yaker, responsible for introducing fairgoers to Little Egypt, the exposition's most popular bellydancer, and Sol Bloom, Corbett's erstwhile manager and future congressman. Yaker managed thirty-five of the Midway's bazaars and was the impresario of the Sudanese Village. According to one likely fictitious story of Corbett's final days at the Midway, the pugilist had been courting a young woman from the Irish village. The two were at dinner when a man from the Sudanese village started paying unwanted attention to the young woman. Corbett took this as provocation and started a fight with the Sudanese performer, who stuck a knife into Corbett's shoulder. Apparently Corbett's response was to knock the man out with a single blow.²⁷ This account, coupled with the fair director's displeasure with Corbett's boxing demonstrations reveals that boxers could not be recast as genteel. No matter how refined Gentleman Jim tried to be, fighting, while gripping to his audiences, was not genteel. It was Eugen Sandow, whose white body was framed as beautiful rather than practical, who won approval while performing in Chicago in the summer of 1883.

IN THIS CORNER: EUGEN SANDOW

A Prussian, Sandow was born Friedrich Müller in Königsburg, in 1867 (Fig. 4). In 1889 he immigrated to Britain. In November of that year, he secured the title of Strongest Man on Earth by defeating French strongman Charles Samson. The competition took place at the Royal Aquarium with the Marquis of Queensberry and Lord de Clifford presiding as judges. Sandow preserved his popularity, even though he only held the title from November 1889 to December 1890, Charles Samson and Louis St Cyr, who preceded and succeeded Sandow as "The Strongest Man on Earth," practically disappeared from the press. The key to Sandow's ongoing popularity was his ability to turn the muscled male body into a spectacle by changing the discursive meaning of muscles: the ideal muscled man, whom Sandow represented, did not use his muscles to fight or to work, but rather cultivated a physique that was an object of visual culture—a body to be observed.

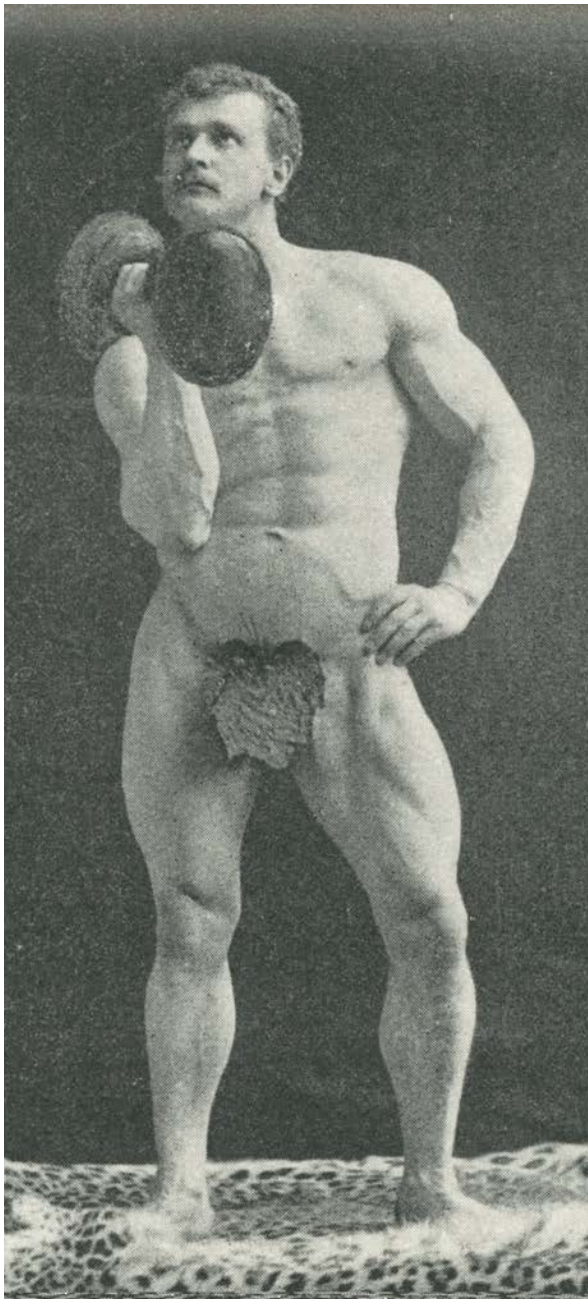


Figure 4. Eugen Sandow.

Just after the fair opened, Sandow embarked on a tour of the United States. On June 12, 1893 Sandow started an engagement at the Casino Theatre in New York, where he was billed to follow the musical comedy *Adonis*. A play about a beautiful statue that comes to life, only to choose to be turned back into stone, the *Adonis* production starred Henry Dixey, who had played the titular character in the original 1884 run. In the last scene of *Adonis*, Henry Dixey, whose slim figure was in keeping with the 1880s ideal of male beauty,²⁸ would stand motionless upon a dais as if he were made of marble. The curtain would fall, only to rise again, revealing Sandow in Dixey's place, dressed in no more than a loin cloth and sandals. Sandow would step down off the pedestal, but unlike Dixey, he would not turn back into a mock statue. Instead he turned summersaults with his ankles bound and eyes blindfolded; he lifted a wicker "barbell" with a man perched in a basket at either end; he positioned himself under a board on which three ponies would step as they crossed over his stomach. The producer's decision to contrast Sandow with Dixey at Dixey's expense suggests that in the closing decade of the century Dixey's lean body was out of fashion.

Lauded in the press as an example of "perfect manhood,"²⁹ Sandow's body was the emblem or brand of that manhood. The marketing of products at the exposition made it clear that a body could be a brand: the exposition saw the first unveiling of pancake mix, presented by a living spokeswoman, Nancy Green, in the character of Aunt Jemima.³⁰ In the Trocadero's promotional material, Sandow is branded, not as an average gentleman, or even as a man with a figure to which others might aspire, but rather as a man apart from other, average, men. A promotional lithograph produced by Cincinnati's Strobridge Lithography Company in 1894 shows Sandow's most widely reported feat, in which he used a one-armed dead-lift to hoist the wicker-basket-and-man dumbbell over his head (Fig. 5). The stage-like space that surrounds the three figures in the poster is highly abstracted. The black background does not meet the stage at a horizon line but rather fuses with the floor in a series of black

and russet brush strokes. Sandow casts a hard shadow on the floor as if he were lit from just above the upper right-hand corner of the image. The same light illuminates the two men perched in their baskets, but, as though they lack Sandow's corporeal substance, they cast no shadow. Sandow is clearly more *substantial* than regular middle-class men represented by the figures in the baskets. Sandow is meant to be observed—his pose, the poster's color scheme, and the gaze of the men in the baskets invite the onlooker to marvel at Sandow's appearance.

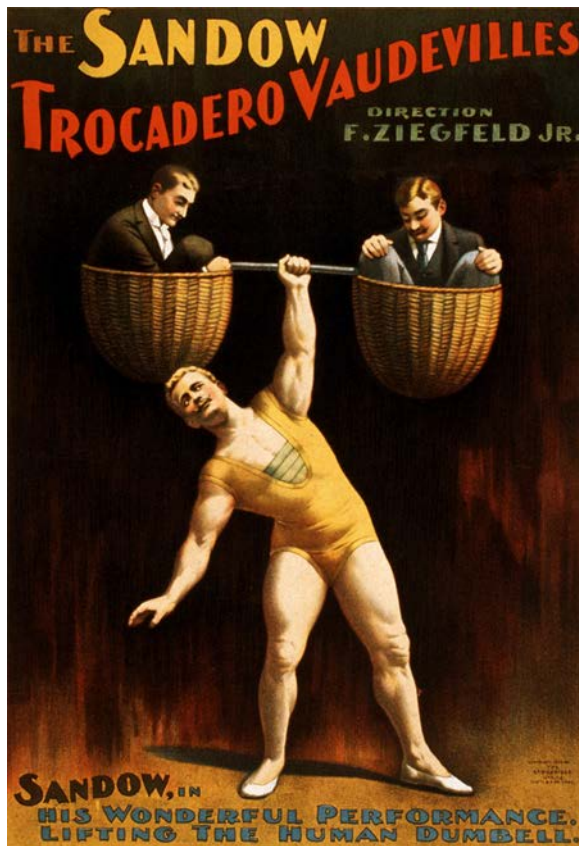


Figure 5. The Sandow Trocadero Vaudevilles

Other men were certainly invited to compare themselves to Sandow—a comparison enabled by close inspection: according to Billie Burke, Ziegfeld's second wife, Sandow "succeeded [in Chicago] because Flo called in all the society ladies he knew and permitted them the thrill of feeling Sandow's muscles" backstage at the Trocadero theatre.³¹ However, the real meaning of Sandow's body was created by the periodical press. The backstage shows capitalized on the sexualized availability of Sandow's body to both women and men. Putatively private, these sexualized encounters were public performances since newspapers like *The National Police Gazette* and *Frank Leslie's Weekly Magazine* publicized them in both written reports and reproduced images. After his shows, journalists and select guests would be invited back stage to feel Sandow's muscles. To titillate readers, press coverage played on the presence of women in Sandow's dressing room and their opportunity not just to see Sandow, but to touch him.

The most lurid descriptions of these backstage visits invite a homoerotic reading. *The National Police Gazette*, a magazine directed at the lower middle-class reader, makes wealthy fans' visits seem clandestine: "The public at large may see Sandow any night [...] in light gymnasium suits, which suggest dimly the marvelous muscular development of the handsome young giant. But after the show is over [...] carriage after carriage rolls up to the door. Men in dress suits and women in opera cloaks alight and pass quickly into the big empty play-house."³² The described visit has the feeling of illicit exclusivity. Like a model in a *tableau vivant*, Sandow wears a "thin pair of flesh-colored tights [which] fit closely over his well-formed legs, a small pair of white satin trunks and light slippers." At private viewings

Sandow's body is available as a visual and tactile object, in a way that it is not in his public performances. The gendering in the title of this *Police Gazette* article, "The Ladies Idolize Sandow," is undermined by the description of Sandow physically compelling at least one man to run his hand over Sandow's body: "'As I come around I want you to pass your right hand flat across my chest.' He approaches the first man, takes the outstretched hand and rubs it over the hard muscles of his iron-ribbed chest." Although the title frames Sandow as the object of women's desire, the ensuing article describes men's attention to his body as much as it does women's.

Ostensibly, the event chronicled in the *National Police Gazette* was a lecture in which Sandow is both the orator and the object of study. He reportedly said, "'I am going to explain to you the muscles of my body, in order that you may appreciate the difference between ordinary development and perfect development,'" at which point the "men look interested. The women gape at him in wonder."³³ While the sensationalism of the article subverts any potential reading of Sandow's private performances as educative (or to borrow language from the press' indictment of Corbett, they lacked the power to elevate), this passage is instructive about the gendered gazes of Sandow's audience. While the women stand about slack-jawed, the men's interest is dispassionate. Over time Sandow would render his "perfect" body an object of *scientific* interest enabling him to court the masculine gaze of empirical observation, which was a more respectable viewing position for the middle-class reader than eroticized scopophilia.

In press coverage reports, Sandow's sexualized performances are further shaped by breaking down the distinction between him and all other middle-class young men. Sandow's regular attire is, Chicago's *The Daily Inter Ocean* reported, "the dress of the average young Englishman who frequents music halls and other fashionable London institutions."³⁴ Sandow is thus positioned as both the object of the theatre-goers' gaze, and, sartorially at least, a member of the theatre-going audience. This elision facilitates a continuity between Sandow and his male fans: if a strongman can be an audience member, perhaps each audience member can be a strongman, and thus subject to the gaze that compels average middle-class men to live up to the standards of the idealized muscular body.

Part of Sandow's performance of "perfect manhood" involved posing as a credible authority on the subject of anatomy.³⁵ Although not actually a scientific practitioner, Sandow capitalized on a rumor that he had started medical school, but had to leave due to a falling out with his father. He flaunted his anatomical knowledge, in one private viewing pointing out "each muscle as he came to it [and calling it] by its scientific name," impressing the onlookers with how well he "understands anatomy."³⁶ This particular account, from the June 25, 1893 issue of *The Daily Inter Ocean*, helped garner interest in Sandow in Chicago—he would start performing with the Trocadero in August. The article introduced Corbett (who was famous for his "scientific" boxing method) as a man whose body is likewise of empirical interest, and who, like Sandow, was himself a gentleman with scientific knowledge.

The press stimulated men's desire to emulate Sandow as a means of defusing the homoerotic reading of his body. The framing of his body as ideal, however, was not produced in a cultural vacuum; rather, it developed relationally and differentially through contrasting models of manly musculature. The less-than-ideal muscled masculinity personified by the heavyweight boxer, Gentleman Jim Corbett, provides a contrast with the ideal masculinity personified by Sandow. Corbett, the originator of scientific boxing, used similar rhetorical strategies as Sandow in an attempt to secure his fame. Both men attempted to exploit popular science to inscribe their bodies as ideally masculine. The public responded differently to the performance of masculinity by a man like Corbett, who was essentially slumming, and Sandow, the son of a green grocer, who was ascending through the ranks of class and financial power.

The press pitted Sandow's version of scientific and genteel muscularity against Gentleman Jim's version. Journalists had already compared Corbett and Sandow, only to find Corbett wanting on the ground that he was not visibly muscular: "compared with Sandow, Corbett, the fighter, is like a lean spring chicken beside a bulldog."³⁷ As we have seen, *The New York World*, a newspaper consistently hostile towards Sandow, was not convinced Sandow would win in a boxing match against Corbett: the quip that "if [Sandow,] the strong man [,] had been in any pugnacious mood the chances are that he would have had his head knocked off" if he crossed Corbett is telling.³⁸ Although, at first glance the slur seems to be directed at Sandow, Corbett is framed as the man who must resort to using, rather than simply displaying, his muscles, thus undermining his gentility.

CONCLUSION

The Midway peep show—advertised as a nudist colony that reflected cartoonish representations of men's bodies back at onlookers—dramatized the uncertain utility of men's muscles in a country without a frontier to settle. White middle-class men were clearly interested in looking at other male bodies in the hopes of finding a new model of perfect manhood. In 1894, the year following the Columbian Exposition, both Corbett and Sandow became popular film subjects. The visual technology on display at the Columbian Exposition, coupled with the sexualized and racialized spaces of the Midway, make the presentation of Sandow and Corbett's bodies in Chicago an ideal example of the changing meaning of the male physique. While the strong body had once been essential for fighting the elements (and indigenous peoples) on the frontier, muscles were not essential for the day-to-day work life of middle-class American men. Both Sandow and Corbett attempted to reframe muscularity as scientific, and, by extension, as middle class. Sandow, with his inclination to pose rather than fight, succeeded where Corbett failed: Sandow became the proprietor of seven middle-class gymnasiums which were decorated to resemble the gentlemen's clubs of London's St. James Street; the editor of a Physical Culture magazine; the impresario of the first British bodybuilding competition (for which the first prize trophy, a statue of Sandow, served as the model for the Mr. Olympia trophy from 1977 onward); and the official Professor of Scientific and Physical Culture to King George V, whereas Jim

Corbett, after a brief stint as a black-face performer, faded into obscurity. The popularity of visual technology at the Columbian Exposition signaled the coming visualist age. In this age, muscles that were put to use posing on stage, rather than punching, represented the ideal modern masculinity.

¹“Corbett Taunts Sandow,” *News Observer Chronicle* (Raleigh, NC, March 14, 1894).

²Frederick Jackson Turner, *The Frontier in American History* (Mineola NY: Courier Dover P, 1996), 38.

³*Ibid.*, 37.

⁴“A Slob: ‘Gentleman Jack’ Says That Sandow Won’t Do,” *The Penny Press*, February 4, 1895.

⁵*Ibid.*

⁶Astrid Boger, *Envisioning The Nation: The Early American World’s Fairs and The Formation of Culture* (Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 2010), 128.

⁷Mary Pepchinski, “Woman’s Buildings at European and American World’s Fairs, 1893-1939,” in *Gendering the Fair: Histories of Women and Gender at World’s Fairs*, ed. T. J. Boisseau and Abigail Markwyn (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2010), 187.

⁸Richard Dyer, “The Matter of Whiteness,” in *White* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 2.

⁹Charles Musser, *The Emergence of Cinema : The American Screen to 1907* (Toronto: Collier Macmillan, 1990), 78.

¹⁰Marta Braun, *Picturing Time: The Work of Etienne-Jules Marey (1830-1904)* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1992), 191.

¹¹Edo McCullough, *World’s Fair Midways: An Affectionate Account of American Amusement Areas from the Crystal Palace to the Crystal Ball* (New York: Arno P, 1976), 49.

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¹³John Kasson, *Houdini, Tarzan, and The Perfect Man* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2001), 89.

¹⁴Louis S. Warren, *Buffalo Bill’s America: William Cody and the Wild West Show* (Toronto: Random House, 2006), 419.

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¹⁷Andrew Horrall, *Popular Culture in London C. 1890-1918: The Transformation of Entertainment* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), 128.

¹⁸Luckett V. Davis, “Sullivan, John L.,” *American National Biography Online* (Oxford University Press, 2000), <http://www.anb.org.ezproxy.library.yorku.ca/articles/19/19-00215.htm>.

¹⁹Luckett V. Davis, “Corbett, James John,” *American National Biography Online* (Oxford University Press, 2000), <http://www.anb.org.ezproxy.library.yorku.ca/articles/19/19-00033.html>; “Post Mortem,” *The National Police Gazette*, September 24, 1892.

²⁰Horrall, *Popular Culture in London C. 1890-1918*, 127-128.

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²²"The Pugilistic Drama: James J. Corbett in 'Gentleman Jack' at the American," *The New York Times* (New York, September 4, 1894).

²³Elliott J Gorn, *The Manly Art: Bare-Knuckle Prize Fighting in America* (Ithaca: Cornell U P, 1986), 89; Guy Reel, "Richard Fox, John L. Sullivan, and the rise of modern American prize fighting," *Journalism History* 27, no. 2 (Summer 2001): 76.

²⁴"Corbett on the Plaisance," *The Daily Inter Ocean* (Chicago, July 4, 1893).

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²⁷McCullough, *World's Fair Midways: An Affectionate Account of American Amusement Areas from the Crystal Palace to the Crystal Ball*, 45.

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³⁴"The Strongest Man: Sandow, a Prussian of Perfect Physique," *The Daily Inter Ocean*, June 25, 1893.

³⁵"The Play."

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³⁷"A Modern Sampson," *Fayetteville Observer*, June 29, 1893.

³⁸"Corbett Taunts Sandow."

IMAGE CREDITS

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2.4.

Picturing Female Patriotism in Three Dimensions: High Street at the 1926 Sesquicentennial

Lydia Mattice Brandt

Incorporating enormous exhibition buildings, a giant electrified Liberty Bell, and avenues scaled to the automobile, the architects of the 1926 Sesquicentennial International Exposition intended the “Forum of the Founders” to be the symbolic center of the Philadelphia fair. The southwest quadrant, however, ended up being the heart and most popular destination for the world’s fair commemorating the 150th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. Filled with reproductions of historic buildings constructed by various national women’s organizations under the aegis of the Sesquicentennial’s Women’s Committee, “High Street” evoked the “charm and dignity” of the Colonial period. Away from the main Beaux Arts axes and formal courts, the architectural replicas provided a more intimate setting for visitors to celebrate the nation’s birthday (Fig. 1). Complete with houses, stores, side alleys, and back gardens, the reconstructed Colonial street was rooted in ideas about the powerful role of women and the domestic environment in providing a moral compass for American society. With a vision of Colonial Philadelphia on the brink of the American Revolution, they offered proof of the ways in which moral, dignified homes resulted in strong communities and patriotic citizens. These varied efforts became even more important in the wake of the corruption that engulfed the largely male Sesquicentennial organization, proving the need for a strong domestic influence on society. While greed clearly drove the male politicians’ interest in the fair, the Women’s Committee provided exhibits they hoped would honor the country’s past with philanthropic and patriotic missions. Through recreations of historic American architecture and landscapes, therefore, women presented a material past that present-day fairgoers could revere and emulate—both literally (by embracing Colonial Revival furniture and architecture) and figuratively (by becoming active and responsible citizens like themselves)—in celebration of the nation’s birthday.

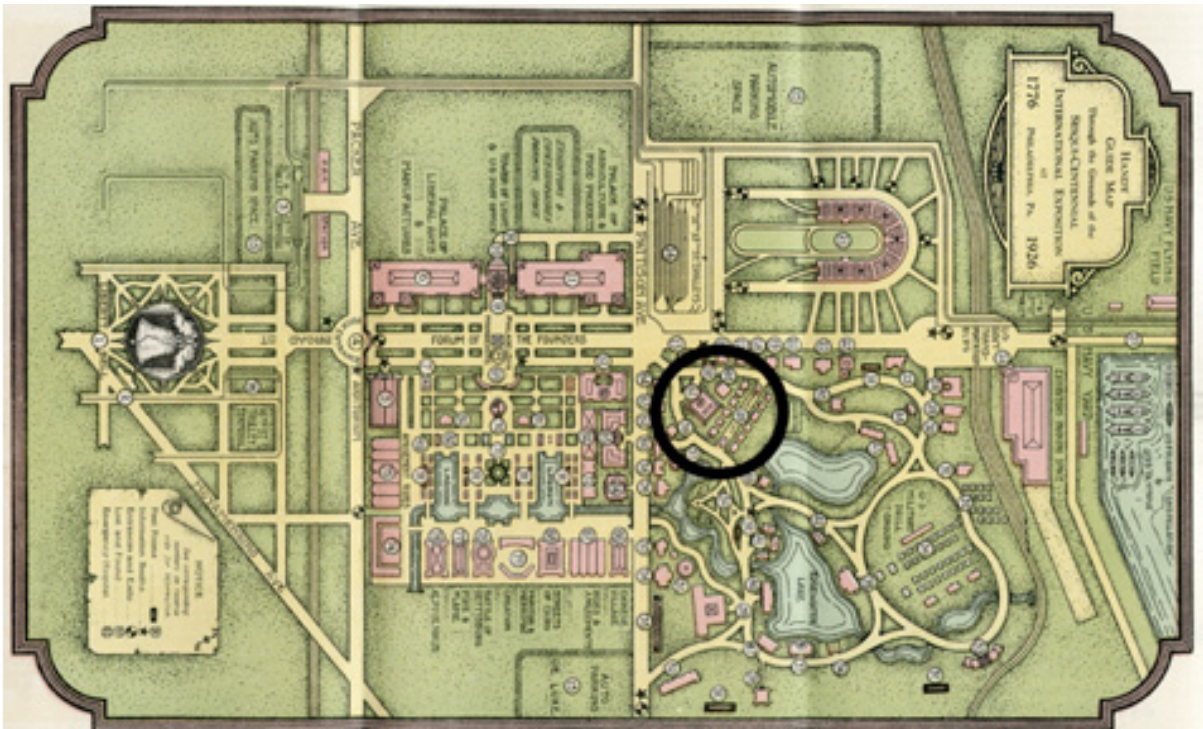


Figure 1: The free map of the 1926 Sesquicentennial International Exposition, Philadelphia. The black circle marks the location of High Street and the accompanying replicas of Mount Vernon and Sulgrave Manor.

**“ALL THE GRACIOUS HOSPITALITY OF COLONIAL DAYS”:
REPLICAS AT THE SESQUICENTENNIAL**

Soon after forming in 1925, the Sesquicentennial Women’s Committee decided to construct a series of replicas of historic houses rather than a single Woman’s Building like that which had united the gender at the 1876 and 1893 fairs.¹ Sarah Dickenson Lowrie, the leader of the effort, wrote in her weekly newspaper article of the Women’s Committee’s decision to build multiple buildings rather than a single one:

Somehow, the majority of the women could not be waked up to feel an interest in four walls that would house the masterpieces of the feminine sex. The thing had been done too often to have any effect of achievement. There was a time when we had to prove that women could do things and were doing things that men did. But we do not have to prove that any more and to reiterate it seems to be a bore. But we women have another thing to prove nowadays, and that is that the family life is influenced not only by the home life but by the community life. We are bound to be exceedingly interested in family life, and we realize more than we ever did that what comes in from the outside to that home is of vital experience. What is more natural than that we should set ourselves, by means of a picture—a picture of three dimensions—to make a composite of an original community which had a great effect on the homes of the past and at the same time prove, if we can, that the essentials of that first community are still the essentials of the surroundings of the homes today.²

Occupied by a wide variety of women’s organizations such as the National League of Women Voters, Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR), War Mothers, Daughters of 1812, and the Philadelphia Teacher’s Association, High Street was not only evidence of the



Figure 2: Okie, Bissell, and Sinkler's rendering for "High Street" at the Sesquicentennial.

strong communities shaped by the women of yesterday, but also those nurtured by the domestic sphere of the 1920s (Fig. 2). Lowrie wrote in High Street's guidebook: "The exteriors of the houses, and in most cases the interiors, are pictures of a historic past, but they are also settings for a very real present. For in every case the hostess organizations occupying these buildings [...] are the modern instances of the original ideas of the founders of the nation."³ By building, outfitting, and occupying the replicas, the various women's organizations made explicit analogies between the selfless patriotic acts of High Street's historic occupants and their own modern missions.

Designed by Philadelphia architecture firm Okie, Bissell, and Sinkler, the project was the brainchild of Lowrie, a well-known suffragette and settlement house worker in Philadelphia, and Elizabeth Price Martin, the founder of the Garden Club of America and wife of a prominent Philadelphia judge (and chairman of the Sesquicentennial Athletic Committee).⁴ Their initial idea was to contrast domestic life of the past with that of the present day, using replicas of historic buildings alongside model modern houses.⁵ After considering the project's limited budget (the women were allotted \$200,000 by the fair, \$2.4 million in today's dollars), the final High Street exhibit consisted of replicas of twenty buildings that had once stood in downtown Philadelphia (most on High Street, known today as Market Street). Replicating or imitating important historical buildings was a tried-and-true technique at American world's fairs. Versions of landmarks such as George Washington's Mount Vernon, John Hancock's demolished Boston mansion, and Independence Hall had been popular exhibits at previous fairs such as the 1893 Chicago World's Columbian Exposition, the 1907 Jamestown Tercentennial Exposition in Virginia, and the 1915 Panama-Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco. Like the women in charge of High Street, those overseeing such historically-oriented, large scale exhibits were usually upper or upper-middle class white women also involved in historic preservation efforts or heritage organizations back at home.⁶

Among others, High Street featured the house occupied by Washington as president of the United States (occupied at the fair by the Daughters of the American Revolution), the townhouse of early government creditor Stephen Girard (the Sesquicentennial's Foreign Relations Committee), the city home of the prominent Dr. William Shippen, Jr. (*Good Housekeeping* magazine), and the boarding house in which Thomas Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence (the Women's Southern Committee and the

Thomas Jefferson Memorial Foundation). Other buildings included a Quaker meetinghouse, stables, infirmary, inn, working forge, log cabin bakery, schoolhouse, Benjamin Franklin's print shop, and a marketplace. Replicas of Mount Vernon and Sulgrave Manor, Washington's English ancestral home, stood just outside of High Street, marking the entrance to that section of the fairgrounds (hosted by the Metropolitan Philadelphia branch of the Young Women's Christian Association and the Colonial Dames of America, respectively). In order to ensure that High Street was free and accessible to all fair visitors, organizations donated funds to maintain the buildings and exhibits.⁷

Lowrie and the architects chose to focus on the overall impression or atmosphere of High Street, rather than adhere to strict historical accuracy in the recreations of individual buildings.⁸ Lowrie told the architects: "our first duty was to make the street interesting from the outside and with enough historical houses to give the right historical atmosphere."⁹ With a goal of creating a Colonial fantasyland rather than an authentic reconstruction, the architects of High Street were playful with the scale, details, and locations of the buildings (some of which had not actually stood on colonial Market Street proper).¹⁰ Buildings were finished with faux-brick and stone to give the illusion of permanent materials, even though they were constructed of wood and staff, a kind of papier-mâché (Fig. 3).



Figure 3: A parade on High Street.

Because of the limited budget and the focus on the effect of the ensemble, High Street's interiors were also finished to varying degrees of authenticity. A few buildings were outfitted with historic or revival interiors that at least approximated historic conditions, done at the expense and discretion of the women's organization in charge of the particular building.¹¹ For instance, the Foreign Relations Committee worked with Chapman Decorative Company of Philadelphia to outfit the Girard House with period rooms "after the French Empire style" favored by its wealthy and fashionable colonial inhabitant.¹² Other groups depended primarily upon the Colonial exterior to manifest the ideals presented in the building's modern interior exhibits. The National League of Women Voters, for example, took charge of the First Infirmary, a small gambrel-roofed house in the center of the block that represented Philadelphia's first public hospital.¹³ Within, they educated "that body of newly enfranchised voters that they may feel the responsibility for good government attained by the original inhabitants of the Street."¹⁴ Their exhibits chastised U.S. citizens who did not take full advantage of their voting rights, depicting those who chose not to vote as "slackers who prefer golf, picnics, the movies and other diversions to exercising their rightful voice in the conduct of government."¹⁵

To ensure that visitors understood the various exhibits as part of an ensemble and to heighten the feeling of a completely reconstructed Colonial community, High Street was lined with hitching posts and old-fashioned street lamps. Small picket fences and gardens designed by local women's horticultural organizations adorned most of the replicas of private houses.¹⁶ The visual effect of the exterior architecture was supplemented by interpreters in Colonial costume: hostesses (representatives of the various women's organizations) dressed in bonnets and aprons, accompanied by a town crier who walked up and down the street calling for lost children and announcing parades, plays, and puppet shows throughout the day (Fig. 4).¹⁷ The end result was that visitors to the fair could imagine what it was like to walk in the shoes of Washington, Jefferson, and other founding fathers along America's first street. The effect of the exhibit was praised in the *Saturday Evening Post*:

It needs an actual street like this, reconstructed before our eyes, to reveal the fine heritage of beauty and dignity in ordinary everyday life which our ancestors have passed on to us [...] But above all, what those early leaders reveal as we throw the searchlight of history upon them, is character—character in the quality of their homes as well as in their outer lives [...] So these homes of another era are in reality symbols of the solid, unspectacular integrity of our forefathers, which we believe still exists in our people today.¹⁸

By experiencing a living, breathing version of the community at the heart of the early republic, the fair's Women's Committee hoped that visitors would be so moved by the past that they would seek to revive its values and styles in their own lives.



Figure 4: Town crier and hostesses in front of the “Little Wooden House” on High Street.

THE ROLE OF WOMEN, THE HOME, AND CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY AT THE SESQUICENTENNIAL

The replicas of Colonial buildings created by the women’s organizations were part of a larger effort by women throughout the Sesquicentennial to provide a living example for how the character and values of the founding fathers could be sustained in contemporary life. In the wake of the Nineteenth Amendment, rising divorce rates, and the emergence of companionate marriage, Lowrie and her compatriots saw the Sesquicentennial more specifically as an opportunity to advocate for a conservative approach to citizenship for America’s women.¹⁹ Unlike the emerging view that insisted that women were equal to men, a view embodied by the sexy flapper, the Sesquicentennial Women’s Committee sustained the long-held belief that women were morally superior and, therefore, the rightful custodians not only of the home but also of society’s values at large.²⁰ At an exposition embroiled in political scandal and financial corruption, the activities of these women offered proof of a need for their supposedly moral, domestic influence on public life.

In many ways, the efforts of Philadelphia’s women did save the Sesquicentennial’s reputation, offering not only popular attractions such as High Street, but also by providing a positive distraction from the political corruption that marred the fair’s planning. Women were central to the Sesquicentennial’s organization from the start, before the exposition became entangled in scandal. The first governing body of the fair, the “Committee of 100” of 1920, included at least seven female members who held equal responsibilities with their male counterparts.²¹ The final board of directors for the Sesquicentennial included four women out of fifty-six members, a representation unprecedented in previous American world’s fairs.²² Although they wielded positions equal to those of the male members, these

women formed the separate “Women’s Committee of the Sesqui-Centennial” in 1925 along with representatives from Philadelphia’s women’s organizations; this committee then quickly delegated various responsibilities to sub-committees.²³ Through efforts including the replicas of historic buildings built on the Sesquicentennial grounds, the preservation and clean-up of downtown Philadelphia, the compilation of walking tours of the historic parts of the city, and the organization of bus tours to explore historic Germantown, the Women’s Committee sought to make an array of historic resources available to inspire and educate Sesquicentennial visitors and city residents.

By creating a separate committee, women were indeed able to escape the political wrangling of the male-dominated groups backing the fair. Their distinct set of projects was, therefore, untainted by the political corruption behind the fair’s funding, planning, and day-to-day operation, corruption usually credited with the venture’s failure to pay for itself, to rally local support, or to draw a national (or international) audience.²⁴ After the idea of a 150th-birthday party for the United States was first suggested for Philadelphia in 1916, the eight years of discussion that followed were dominated by a tug-of-war between progressives, who saw the fair as an opportunity to reform Philadelphia with City Beautiful planning, and the city’s Republican machine, which was interested in using the fair to reward loyal ward bosses on the city’s South Side with municipally-funded improvements and infrastructure.²⁵ With the election of Republican Mayor Freeland W. Kendrick in 1923, the latter prevailed and the fair became a municipal project and a means to pay political favors.²⁶ In protest against the very undemocratic process of planning and building the Sesquicentennial, many Philadelphians opposed the fair outright and the federal government delayed and significantly reduced its appropriation.²⁷

The efforts by the Women’s Committee, meanwhile, were credited as being “the one part of the Sesqui-Centennial [...] concerning which there was no regret nor criticism; the one feature that didn’t fall short of hopes or promises.”²⁸ The Committee was dedicated to mending the fair’s reputation. One member described their work: “We women are striking the patriotic note and are upholding the spiritual side of the celebration. We desire to show to the world that we are not a nation of money grabbers and commercialists solely, and so we are emphasizing those things which made the country what it is and will keep it so.”²⁹ By presenting idealized images of Colonial life, the replicas and activities of the Women’s Committee provided a counterpoint to the dirty politics behind the Sesquicentennial; in both the lives of the founders and the work of its members, the Women’s Committee offered examples of how to be responsible citizens. While their male counterparts were busy patting each other on the back and stuffing their own pockets, a reporter wrote three months into the exposition, “...it is only fair to say that this odious backbiting seems chiefly confined, so far as the Sesqui is concerned, to the men. The women have shown a far better spirit, and too much praise cannot be given to the unselfish manner in which scores of them have labored to make the exposition a great success.”³⁰

The Women's Committee's preference to work within a separate, gender-defined group reflected the position of many conservative women in the 1920s. Acting under the mantle of the Women's Committee, female members of organizations created a "separate women's public sphere" at the Sesquicentennial.³¹ Maturing during the late nineteenth century when women did not have the right to vote, most of these organizations provided literal or ideological spaces where women could support each other in positions of power and achieve social reform without having to fully immerse themselves in the traditionally male political sphere. Even after World War I and the Nineteenth Amendment demonstrated the potential contributions of professional women, these organizations continued to segregate themselves by gender. Rather than see suffrage as a means for equality with men, their members understood the vote as a way to promote the social reform agendas they had already been advocating for decades.³²

Echoing the arguments of earlier female-led urban reform and preservation organizations, the Women's Committee sought to positively shape the moral impact of the Sesquicentennial through the extension of the domestic environment into the public sphere. Similarly, late nineteenth-century "municipal housekeeping" associations had expanded the principles of a productive and efficient household to an urban scale through efforts literally to clean up the city and provide relief for the deplorable living conditions of the largely immigrant poor.³³ At the same time, newly formed historic preservation organizations presented similar arguments for the potential moral impact of women and the home on public life. When the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association of the Union (MVLAs) began as the first national women's preservation organization in the United States in the 1850s, for example, it argued that Mount Vernon should be saved as an example for how the home had—and would continue—to shape virtuous American citizens.³⁴ As women founded other preservation organizations in the following decades, they echoed the MVLAs' arguments. Although all of these groups claimed to lack political agendas and to be acting within traditional female roles, they were certainly active in political life and made significant contributions to the public sphere.

Like settlement house workers and historic preservationists of the late nineteenth century, the Women's Committee and its affiliated organizations conservatively suggested that women citizens could offer a healing influence to society through the physical extension of the domestic sphere.³⁵ The corruption of the Sesquicentennial was a case-in-point: the Women's Committee brought exhibits to the fair that inspired patriotism without being spoiled by the greed of men.

"HOW A BRAND NEW HOUSE MIGHT BE BUILT AND YET PRESERVE THE OLD CHARM": THE WOMEN'S COMMITTEE AND THE COLONIAL REVIVAL

Much like early female-driven historic preservation efforts, the Women's Committee recognized the physical power of specifically *historic* buildings to reinforce the larger public importance of the domestic sphere. Lowrie wrote in the guidebook to the exhibit:

For the Street is not merely a picture of what has been, it is a symbol of what is. In it are the essentials of the exterior and the interior of an American home. The twentieth century home is bound to be effected [sic] by the community just as the community is bound to effect the home...This is no truer of today than it was of a century and a half ago in America, and all the essentials existed then and on the High Street of Washington's, Franklin's and Jefferson's day. We cannot improve upon those essentials, we can only amplify them and honor the original valuations of them, by making the most of the ideals that we owe to the first makers of homes in this country.³⁶

While the Women's Committee hoped that just the experience of seeing and visiting High Street's historic homes would be enough to rouse patriotism and remind visitors of the important influence of the home on civic life, they also advocated a more active relationship between the homemaker, the domestic environment, and virtuous citizenship. The exhibits suggested that just as Colonials had shaped a perfect setting for a dignified revolution by carefully choosing and arranging objects in the buildings on High Street, so the modern woman could do in her contemporary home.³⁷ While one newspaper commented on what Martha Washington would think as she "[set] out to go shopping in the Street of '76," another described the appreciation a "Colonial housewife" might have for candles on sale in High Street's market: "Tall tapers such as she probably never saw are here colored most charmingly."³⁸ By likening Colonial women to modern consumers and offering an array of Colonial Revival goods, High Street demonstrated how female exposition visitors could create the tasteful homes supposedly key to the American woman's larger civic role.

After centuries of making household goods by hand, women's responsibilities shifted in the nineteenth century from those of producer to consumer. By the 1920s, Americans had long considered the furnishing of domestic interiors as a self-expression of the inhabitants.³⁹ Lowrie herself spoke of the interiors of High Street as extensions of the women who created them; she praised the "charm of the good taste of the past generation."⁴⁰ The idea that through the creation of sound moral environments, American women could nurture the growth of strong citizenship amongst younger generations and ward off the potentially corrupting influences of urban and industrial life was also well established by the 1920s.⁴¹ Accordingly, High Street presented the outfitting of a home not only as a reflection of a woman's personality, but also a part of her essential duties as wife, mother, and guardian of society's morals.⁴²

The simple, patriotic designs of the Colonial era were especially favored in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as a tasteful way to outfit a dignified and appropriate domestic environment for American families. The idealized emulation of America's early material culture, art, and architecture, often termed the Colonial Revival, was at its peak at the time of the Sesquicentennial.⁴³ As technology and a modern economy allowed for more leisure time and the private automobile became vastly more accessible, more Americans began to travel to see historic sites and to collect antiques—a

pastime that had previously been limited only to the wealthy.⁴⁴ The renewed interest in finding and defining a traditional American aesthetic was also a reaction against unfamiliar (and imported) Modernism at a time of heightened concerns over nativism.⁴⁵

Dubbed the “democratization” of American memory by historian Michael Kammen, this spreading interest in the Colonial Revival was also fed by a growing number of house museums and public collections of American decorative arts.⁴⁶ By the 1920s, the period room, derived from the New England Kitchen exhibits at late nineteenth-century American world’s fairs, the MVLA’s restoration of Mount Vernon, and subsequent full-scale replicas of historic buildings constructed at international expositions, had become common in American museums across the country.⁴⁷ Period rooms provided a visual means for people to understand the ways in which Americans historically arranged their houses; they also suggested ideas for how contemporary homes could be furnished and decorated. When the first major permanent exhibition of historic American interiors opened at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York in 1924, for example, the popular periodical *House Beautiful* featured a multi-paged spread of images of the period rooms entitled “The House in Good Taste.”⁴⁸ The article provided specific information about the style and arrangement of historic furnishings, all the while suggesting that the same types of pieces and arrangements could be adopted for modern homes.

As early American furniture became increasingly revered and well-studied and the general population became more interested in and exposed to the nation’s early material culture, manufacturers and retailers began to create and aggressively market reproduction furniture and decorative arts. While only the wealthiest Americans might have afforded (or even been interested in) historic decorative arts a few decades previously, copies of museum-quality pieces became widely available by the mid-1920s.⁴⁹ Such affordable Colonial Revival goods allowed more Americans than ever to revel in their material heritage.

The Women’s Committee took advantage of the popularity of Colonial Revival goods and used High Street as an opportunity to promote the role of the female consumer in America’s past and present. Unlike most historic house museums, the finished interiors of High Street were not filled with historical artifacts. Rather, they demonstrated how reproduction furniture could be arranged to create tasteful interiors and offered goods widely available for purchase, suggesting ways in which the modern woman could use the lessons of the past to create her own home. Much like the American Wing at the Metropolitan and most contemporary studies of American decorative arts, however, the Women’s Committee focused on the most elite Colonial houses and furnishings.

Most of High Street’s finished interiors featured a combination of revival and antique furniture and decorative arts, arranged as period rooms. Overseen by the Daughters of the American Revolution, the Philadelphia Arts and Crafts Guild furnished the replica of the house occupied by George and Martha Washington during their time in Philadelphia (recently partially reconstructed on its original site). Using an inventory of the furniture

owned by Washington during his presidency, the house offered a vision of the “alterations and furnishings, in good taste but ‘not extravagant’” directed by the first president himself (see Fig. 5). At least 75,000 people saw the rooms outfitted with the Guild’s reproductions of Colonial furniture, all of which were for sale at their Rittenhouse Square galleries. Accompanying the reproductions were also genuine antique prints and decorative arts, wallpaper copied by W. H. S. Lloyd and Company from a Connecticut house in which Washington once slept, and revival brocades designed by F. Schumacher & Co. and Arthur H. Lee & Son.⁵⁰



Figure 5: The dining room of the Washington House on High Street.

Similar to the DAR’s Washington House was a replica of the boarding house in which Jefferson drafted the Declaration of Independence, overseen by the Southern Committee and the recently formed Thomas Jefferson Memorial Foundation which was then in the process of restoring Jefferson’s Monticello.⁵¹ Because little was known of the actual furniture from the long-demolished building (since reconstructed on its original site), the major department store chain Strawbridge & Clothier provided reproduction furniture based on items at Monticello in order “to make live again the most intimate surroundings of this national document.”⁵² The department store produced a pamphlet to accompany the exhibit, complete with historical descriptions, images, and prices of the reproduction furniture fit for “present-day American homes.”⁵³

High Street's replica of the townhouse of the first doctor to offer medical classes in Philadelphia was the ultimate lesson in the way modern tastes could be merged with a Colonial-era aesthetic. Finished and furnished by *Good Housekeeping* magazine, the Shippen House displayed "the charm of Colonial times with the added comforts and necessities of modern living" and showed "how a brand new house might be built and yet preserve the old charm."⁵⁴ The building was the only one on High Street with an interior finished from top to bottom, including bedrooms, bathrooms, and a modern kitchen. With all items well-labeled (and conveniently listed in the building's pamphlet) and available for purchase at retailers across the country, the Shippen House encouraged female visitors to think about the ways in which modern conveniences such as electricity, refrigerators, and running water could be combined with Colonial Revival furniture and details. The Women's Committee's final report on the building proclaimed: "This masterpiece of furnishing was accomplished by the Good Housekeeping Studio which undertook the modernizing of the interior in so practical a manner that it was easily demonstrated that one can possess one's ancestral home and be modernly at home in it."⁵⁵ The Shippen, Declaration, and Washington Houses made historic American architecture and decorative arts stylish and attainable by advocating the consumption of Colonial Revival goods.⁵⁶ They also suggested that through consumption and interior decoration, American women could craft the homes that would shape the patriots of the future.

Through a series of replicas of historic American buildings amidst a scandal-ridden, failing world's fair, the Sesquicentennial's Women's Committee created a positive vision not only of America's past, but also of its present and future. From the Daughters of the American Revolution to the League of Women Voters, the various women's organizations hoped to offer a compelling example of the power of the feminine, domestic sphere through their own efforts on High Street. The official historians of the Sesquicentennial wrote in their account of the fair: "It was in keeping with the general recognition of the broadening scope of woman's sphere in modern life that women were called upon to take a greater part in planning and administering the Exposition than had been the case in connection with any previous international exposition."⁵⁷ Their collection of Colonial Revival-inspired replicas was, as Sarah D. Lowrie put it: "not only a text in architecture and in good taste, but a text on how to live simply, effectively and with dignity."⁵⁸ By making the most of small budgets, providing educational opportunities, and focusing on patriotism, the women who built High Street strove to be living proof that the values embedded in Colonial dwellings lived on in modern homes.

⁵⁴See Wanda M. Corn, Charlene G. Garfinkle, and Annelise K. Madsen, *Women Building History: Public Art at the 1893 Columbian Exposition* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011); Jeanne Madeline Weiman, *The Fair Women: The Story of the Women's Building, World's Columbian Exposition, Chicago 1893* (Chicago: Academy Chicago, 1981); Virginia Grant Darney, "Women and World's Fairs: American International Expositions, 1876-1904" (Ph.D. diss., Emory University, 1982).

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- ¹³See "The First Infirmary, 'High' Street of 1776," pamphlet, Box: Sesquicentennial Pamphlets and Brochures, CSC; "High Street Under Direction of Women's Committee, Mrs. Henriques Crawford, Director," undated report, High Street Record Book 8, CSC; undated report, High Street Record Book 8, CSC.
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- ¹⁵"Women Dedicate House at Sesqui," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 27 June 1926, Scrapbook 10, SEAR.
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²⁰Joanna J. Meyerowitz, *Women Adrift: Independent Wage Earners in Chicago, 1880-1930* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1988), 117-39; Rosalind Rosenberg, *Beyond Separate Spheres: Intellectual Roots of Modern Feminism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982).

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²³See Mrs. Wilmer Krusen, "Story of the Women's Committee of the Sesqui-Centennial," High Street Record Book 8, CSC.

²⁴"The Sesqui a Financial Failure," *The Literary Digest*, 23 October 1926, 14; Steven Conn, *Museums and American Intellectual Life, 1876-1926* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998), 233-62.

²⁵E. L. Austin and Odell Hauser, *The Sesqui-Centennial International Exposition* (Philadelphia: Current Publications, Inc., 1929), 27; Cleary, "The Past Is Present," 45-71. See also Sam Bass Warner, Jr., *The Private City: Philadelphia in Three Periods of Its Growth* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1968), 214-23.

²⁶Cleary, "The Past Is Present," 80-100.

²⁷See "Let's Get Together!," broadside dated 10 October 1923, Sesqui-Centennial Exhibition Records, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia; Cleary, "The Past Is Present," 96-100.

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³⁵See Freedman, "Separatism as Strategy," 518.

³⁶Lowrie, forward to *The Book of the Street*, 10-11.

³⁷See Cleary, "The Past Is Present," 138.

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- ⁴⁹See Karal Ann Marling, *George Washington Slept Here: Colonial Revivals and American Culture, 1876-1986* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), 176-82.
- ⁵⁰“The Washington House, Sesqui-Centennial Philadelphia 1926: Headquarters of the American Revolution,” pamphlet, Box: Sesquicentennial Pamphlets and Brochures, CSC.
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⁵⁸Sarah D. Lowrie quoted in "Women's Support Is Pledged Sesqui," *Philadelphia Record*, 9 February 1926, Scrapbook 7, SEAR.

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2-3. Printed with permission from Historic Strawberry Mansion.

4-5. Printed with permission from the Free Library of Philadelphia.

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2.5.

Expressions of Pride at *A Century of Progress*

Cheryl R. Ganz

The 1933 Chicago World's Fair opened its gates during very, very bleak times. Factory failures, unemployment, and the deepening depression dominated headlines around the world, and the Windy City's residents certainly endured their share of hardship and despair. What inspired the optimism of organizers and businessmen willing to gamble on a world's fair at a time like that? After all, Philadelphia's 1926 fair, held during the rollicking 1920s, had been a financial failure.¹

Those who organized the 1933 fair, known as *A Century of Progress*, believed that their massive project would bolster the local economy and project a sense of optimism, and this vision drove them. From the outset, they also realized that, although visitors from far-flung places would attend, the city itself must provide the fair's core resources and financial support. At the time, immigrant groups—German, Poles, Scandinavians, Irish, Italians, Russians, and many more—comprised two-thirds of Chicago's nearly five million residents. Groups clustered by language and nationality—a reality that gave Chicago another

moniker, the “city of neighborhoods”—which helped to preserve their traditions and ethnic identities. If the benefits the fair organizers imagined were to materialize, they needed to engage these groups. Hence, very early in the planning stages, organizers established the Committee of Coordination of Nationalities.

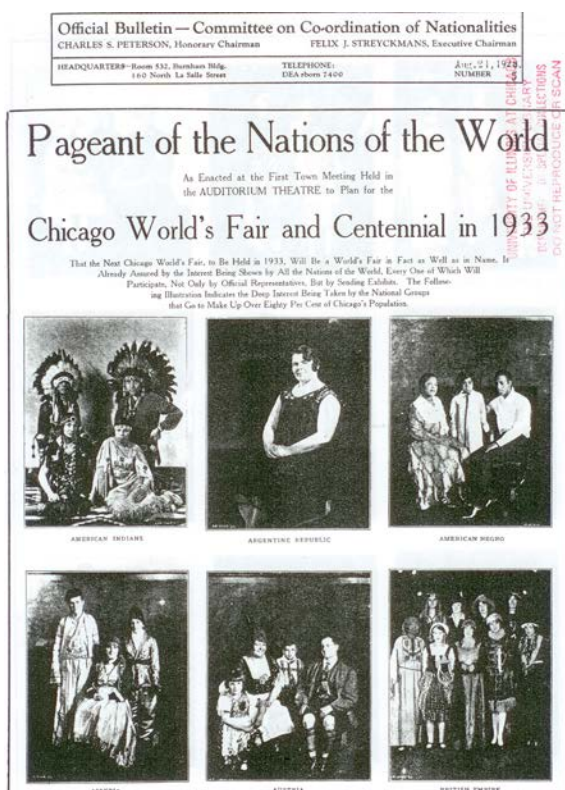


Figure 1. This 1928 *Official Bulletin of the Committee on Co-ordination of Nationalities* includes portraits of Chicagoans in ancestral heritage costumes. The American Negro family chose instead to wear American clothing of the 1930s.

Although they were now Chicagoans proud of their adopted city, most immigrants in these groups enthusiastically accepted invitations to express their ethnic heritage: food, dance, costume, flags, and a huge assortment of ephemera were common media. While these peoples lacked representation on the high level fair management committees, they controlled their own events, displays, and the souvenirs they sold.² This article examines three mementos sold at *A Century of Progress*, each demonstrating pride in ethnic or racial heritage and accomplishment.



Figure 2. Chicago mayor Anton J. Cermak was immortalized on a 1933 Chicago world's fair souvenir dinner plate.

MAYOR ANTON J. CERMAK MEMORIAL PLATE

Chicago, like all great American industrial cities, rose to prominence on the backs of immigrants. Over time, immigrants claimed positions in business, social, and political circles, heightening ethnic pride among others with roots in a shared homeland. In 1931, two years before *A Century of Progress* opened, Chicago immigrant groups united to elect the city's first foreign-born mayor, Anton J. Cermak (1873-1933), a shrewd street politician from Bohemia (now the Czech Republic). Cermak's tireless efforts to bring jobs to the bankrupt city garnered a popularity and gratitude that spanned ethnic lines and helped develop the city's first multi-ethnic political machine. Tragically, while visiting Miami in February 1933, an assassin's bullet intended for President-elect Franklin D. Roosevelt downed Cermak.

Despite frigid weather, throngs of grief-stricken Chicagoans watched Cermak's funeral procession and witnessed his interment at Chicago's Bohemian National Cemetery. A souvenir porcelain plate, available at the exposition, embodied the city's admiration for its late mayor. The plate's border, which includes the logo of *A Century of Progress*, traces Cermak's life and career—in his homeland, as a coal miner in Illinois, as a state representative, and as chief bailiff in Chicago. Images of the fair's most iconic buildings, the Travel and Transport Building and the Hall of Science, provide the backdrop for a portrait of Cermak as mayor. Rays of sunlight beaming from the portrait imply his optimism and, for his constituents, his saintliness. The words that Cermak uttered to FDR from his deathbed —“I'm glad it was me and not you”—encircle the portrait. A Biblical quotation honoring Cermak, “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his

friends,” appears below the portrait. To Chicago’s ethnic voters, Cermak had sacrificed his life for them, not just their newly elected president.

MAIL FLOWN BY ZEPPELIN

Eager to tout their ethnic pride and accomplishments, *A Century of Progress’s* German-American Group issued an invitation for Germany’s LZ-127 *Graf Zeppelin* to visit the exposition. The Zeppelin Company (*Luftschiffbau Zeppelin G.m.b.H.*) agreed to fly the zeppelin to Chicago and the fair if the U.S. Post Office Department issued a special postage stamp to help offset the expenses of the flight. Happily for the German-American Group, in the fall of 1933, the POD issued a green 50¢ stamp featuring a zeppelin in its vignette. As stipulated, 42 1/2 of the 50¢ went to the Zeppelin Company. The German-American Group and its president, Chicago Postmaster Ernest J. Kruetgen, officially welcomed *Graf Zeppelin* and Dr. Hugo Eckener, head of the Zeppelin Company and the airship’s commander. Kruetgen sold the first sheet of stamps to fellow German-American Karl Eitel, owner of the Bismarck Hotel, where Eckner stayed during his visit. The German-American Group itself purchased 2,000 stamps, a significant investment during the Great Depression.

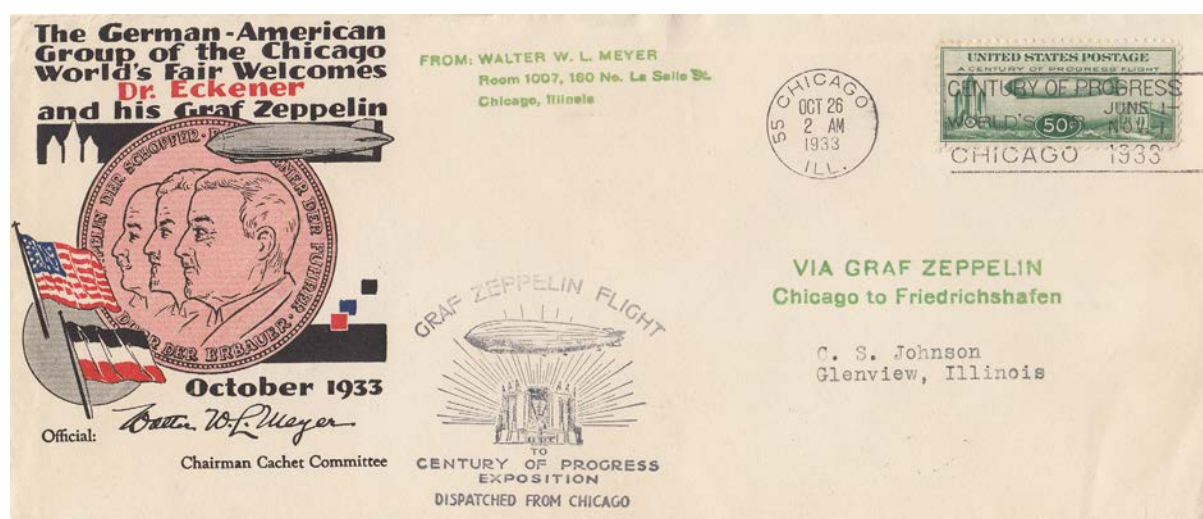


Figure 3. The German-American Group cacheted mail franked with the 50¢ zeppelin stamp. The *Graf Zeppelin* carried this envelope from Chicago to Friedrichshafen after the airship visited the 1933 Chicago world’s fair.

In yet another postal-related expression of ethnic pride, the German group sponsored cacheted souvenir envelopes in standard and business size for the *Graf Zeppelin* visit. The cachet depicts a medal with three profiles—(Ferdinand von) Zeppelin, the creator; (Ludwig) Durr, the builder; and (Dr. Hugo) Eckener, the (Zeppelin Company) leader. It pointedly omits the Nazi flag with its swastika but includes American and German flags. The Prussian State Mint in Berlin had issued the medal in 1929 to commemorate *Graf Zeppelin’s* flight around the world. Three prominent Chicagoans, all German-Americans, comprised the cachet committee—Postmaster Kruetgen, real estate agent Bernard DeVry, and Walter W.L. Meyer, a prominent attorney and philatelist. Because the rates varied depending on legs flown by the *Graf Zeppelin*, envelopes could be franked with one, two,

three, or four stamps. Rubber stamp markings applied by Meyer identified his return address and whether the cover should be flown by the zeppelin to Akron, Ohio; Seville, Spain; or Friedrichshafen, Germany. Chicago's German-American charities received the proceeds from sales of the cacheted envelopes.

DU SABLE PICTURE POSTCARDS

Souvenirs produced by ethnic groups for *A Century of Progress* expressed pride of heritage, accomplishment, and the groups' rightful places in Chicago's progress. African-American clubwomen of the National De Saible Memorial Society, battling prejudice and exclusion from Chicago's "white" establishments, used a postcard to make a pointed statement about their place in the city's history—a statement that stirred so much ire in 1933 that a second, "footnoted" card appeared in 1934. They claimed that a black man had been Chicago's first settler and founder.

African-American clubwomen—educated, middle class, professional—spearheaded fair participation by proposing a replica of the log cabin built by Jean Baptiste Point Du Sable at the mouth of the Chicago River in ca. 1774. His settlement pre-dated that of the Kinzies, long believed by non-African-Americans to be Chicago's founding family. The replica cabin ultimately stood on the Midway near other reproductions of pioneer sites. The clubwomen themselves provided tours, surprising many visitors with their dignity, knowledge, and grace. Their presentations instilled pride among African-American visitors, but others listened in disbelief as they heard Du Sable named as Chicago's founding father.⁴



Figure 4. Both the 1933 and 1934 postcards sold at the Du Sable cabin used imaginary images from an 1884 publication in a campaign to bring rightful recognition to Chicago's first settler.

During the Great Depression, most people had little money for expensive souvenirs. By comparison, postcards cost very little, and they were sold by the millions. In 1933, the African-American clubwomen sold a postcard with an illustration of Du Sable's cabin, cropped from the frontispiece engraving of Alfred T. Andreas's *History of Chicago* (1884). A signature identifies E. White as the artist who sketched the cabin. The text on the addressee side reads, "A reproduction of the first house built in Chicago in 1779 by Jean Baptiste Point De Saible, a Santo Domingan Negro." Text on the reverse of the postcard

emphasized the significance of the cabin in Chicago after Du Sable sold the property: “In this house the first white child was born and married, the first election and the first court were held.”⁵ The card projected a strong and, for many, unwelcome message about the distinctive place held by blacks in Chicago’s history. Some visitors insulted the guides and asked incredulous questions; still, they bought the postcards.⁶ Disquieted by the negative reaction, the clubwomen determined to document their claim. To strengthen their assertion, the postcard issued in 1934 reproduced the entire Andreas frontispiece, similar text, and the authoritative reference.⁷

The replica cabin, intelligent and genteel guides, and souvenir postcards sparked a public dialogue that eventually elevated Du Sable to his rightful place as a key figure in Chicago’s history. Further, they validated the clubwomen’s claim that African-Americans deserved recognition for their contributions to Chicago’s development and had a right to a place in the city’s social, cultural, political, and economic future.

CONCLUSION

The variety and number of souvenirs sold at *A Century of Progress* underscore the success of fair organizers in engaging Chicago’s diverse population groups in their risky endeavor. The exposition’s balance sheet verifies this. Upon closer scrutiny, the souvenirs also reveal the depth of pride ethnic populations felt in both their heritage and their investment in Chicago’s progress. The expressions of most groups went uncontested. African-Americans, however, used fair participation and souvenirs to state a clear but charged message. *A Century of Progress* offered them the stage to demonstrate their dignity and claim their rightful place in the city’s history.

For two years during the Great Depression, *A Century of Progress* brought enchantment to Chicagoans. Generations reminisced about the fair and displayed their souvenirs throughout their lives. Now, with those generations nearly gone, younger generations seek ways to understand and, perhaps, taste of bit of the fair experience. Ephemera and artifact souvenirs open a window into the challenges, optimism, and expressions of pride that was *A Century of Progress*.

¹See Cheryl Ganz, *The 1933 Chicago World’s Fair: A Century of Progress* (University of Illinois Press, 2008, 2012). I am grateful to M.T. Sheahan for collaboration on this essay.

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³Alex Gottfried, *Boss Cermak of Chicago: A Study of Political Leadership* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1962) 318, 325; *World’s Fair Memorial of the Czechoslovak Group* (Czechoslovak Group: Chicago, 1933).

⁴Mrs. Charles S. Duke, “Mrs. Duke Writes about Du Saible Cabin at Fair,” *Chicago Defender*, September 16, 1933, 3.

⁵A.T. Andreas, *History of Chicago from the Earliest Period to the Present Time, Vol. I* (Chicago: A.T. Andreas, 1884).

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IMAGE CREDITS

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2.6.

“Plump, Moist, and a Bit of a Chump:” Facing the Future with Elmer at the 1939 World’s Fair

Katie Uva

When the 1939 World’s Fair opened, it promised the “dawn of a new day,” a shining vision of modernity in which nations would be at peace with one another and mankind would progress in a collective and uninterrupted fashion, aided by technological and industrial advancements. The Fair was a joint endeavor, funded by New York City, New York State, the federal government, foreign governments, and nearly \$28,000,000 in private bonds.¹ All of the Fair’s stakeholders hoped it would generate a great deal of revenue and reinvigorate New York’s economy, which was still struggling with the effects of the Depression. Many of these stakeholders were businessmen who hoped that the Fair would provide not only an immediate economic boost but also still-greater long-term effects—that the Fair would “give the public a chance to see and hear what an indispensable contribution industry is making to social and economic existence.”²

By the end of the 1939 season, however, the Fair’s organizers were somewhat disappointed. Admissions totaled 26 million, far short of the 45-60 million they had projected.³ Some blamed the Depression for keeping non-locals away; many potential visitors balked at all of the expenses (lodging, food, transportation) a visit to the fair would cost them. Still more people criticized the high cost of admission to the Fair; in the first season, a ticket cost 75 cents for adults and 25 cents for children, with another 50 cents for parking and additional expenses for concessions and some exhibits.⁴ This was no small matter to the average American family, which in the mid-1930s lived on an income of \$1,524 per year, with an average of just \$12 of disposable income.⁵

Beyond the issue of cost, however, loomed a larger problem. While many visitors to the Fair were impressed by its striking visuals, its many entertaining exhibits and amusements, and its displays of foreign cultures and international cooperation, others were put off by the Fair’s vision of a streamlined, technologically dependent future. A future in which automation replaced manual labor, leaving Americans to spend unprecedented amounts of time enjoying leisure and recreation, held limited appeal in 1939, when one in six Americans was unemployed.⁶ Many Americans related this unemployment directly to automation; technological unemployment had been the subject of much debate throughout the 1920s

and 1930s, with a 1939 Gallup poll showing that 23% of Americans cited automation as the source of their unemployment.⁷

A more generalized resistance to technology was another factor, although harder to measure. The Fair unequivocally celebrated technology, science, and efficiency, asserting that they would point the way to a more rational and successful future. Nevertheless, there was an undercurrent of standardization, rapid change, and possible dislocation that the Fair, with its buoyant optimism, did not address. A promotional booklet for the Fair embodied these contradictions, and the pervasive element of coercion, with these closing lines:

Tomorrow is but a step away—two steps to the moon. It is the land of faery, of make-believe—and it is the land of reality. It is both a prophecy and a fulfillment. It is New York's World's Fair—and yours. You will be coming.⁸

In the context of disappointing ticket sales, high costs, and possible alienation, the Fair's planners found themselves scrambling to make a change at the end of the first season. One idea was to shift the promotion of the Fair, which had been Grover Whalen's responsibility, to someone else. Whalen, whom *Time* magazine described as "barrel-chested and haughty," had made a career as New York's "official greeter," and was famous for throwing ticker-tape parades and wearing a silk top hat.⁹ After a lackluster season, at the Fair, however, Whalen's approach seemed to need reevaluating. He was replaced with the "dourly responsible" Harvey Dow Gibson who promised to revive the Fair for its second season.¹⁰

Gibson delivered on that promise in April of 1940. He called a press conference and introduced the newspapermen to Elmer, a genial, chubby man with horn-rimmed spectacles, a hat "creased in the style popular with southern deputy sheriffs," and his thumbs perennially hooked into his vest in a gesture of pleasure and contentment. "Howdy Folks!" Elmer greeted the onlookers.¹¹ Gibson went on to explain his marketing creation: Elmer would stroll the grounds of the Fair, greeting people and posing for photos. His face would also grace many of the Fair's promotional materials, including a poster displaying the newly lowered price and the slogan "Makes You Proud of Your Country" (Fig. 1).



Figure 1: Elmer posing with publicity poster, 1940.

The second year of the Fair sought to be a marked departure from the first. Since its beginning, the Fair had been plagued by less than stellar receipts, but it had also begun to seem out of touch with reality. It had promised a peaceful world of international cooperation just as Hitler launched his invasion of Czechoslovakia and Poland, and Stalin invaded Finland. This irony was impossible to ignore during the second season when the pavilions of many European

nations were operating in diminished fashion and the Soviet pavilion was gone entirely, replaced by the “American Common.”¹²

Elmer was one way of bringing the Fair into safer territory. In the face of ominous international developments, the Fair refocused on America, changing the theme from “The World of Tomorrow” to “For Peace and Freedom.” It also sponsored events like “I am an American Day” and reinserted “average folks” into the discussion with contests to find the most typical American family. Elmer was the supreme manifestation of this attempt to ease the public’s mind and make the Fair less of a “comprehensive picture of the epochal achievements of a century and a half of modern civilization,” and more of a “supercounty fair.”¹³

Most people applauded this transition. Newspapers praised the fact that the Fair lowered the price of admission and changed its tone from silk hat to felt hat. *The New York Times* wistfully opined, “...if the world were full of Elmers, there would be no crime and no wars, though bridge, golf, and betting on the horse races might still remain to trouble humanity.”¹⁴ Elmer was a composite of codified American values, as American as the apple pie he baked in one promotional photograph (Fig. 2).



Figure 2: Elmer baking a pie.

Still, Elmer’s position was ambiguous. On the one hand, he was an amiable, accessible, all-American country fellow. On the other hand, Elmer was absolutely a figure of fun, and not an American anyone would aspire to be. He was praised for his simple values and plain-spokenness, but also derided as a rube and a bumpkin whose hobbies included gum chewing, strolling, smiling, and “raising his voice in convention quarters.”¹⁵ He was a lovable character but one rooted in a rapidly disappearing past. Modern Americans differentiated themselves from Elmer in their urbanity and their willingness to embrace the future. Conscientious Americans would much sooner model themselves on the Middletons, a fictional family designed by Westinghouse to promote the Fair (Fig. 3).



Figure 3: The Middletons, 1939.

Unlike Elmer, who was “plump, moist, and a bit of a chump,” the Middletons were trim, well-dressed, and good-looking, a “lovable family” characterized mainly by their unbridled enthusiasm for the Fair, and particularly for Westinghouse products.¹⁶

Ultimately, the Fair’s second season reorientation and the presence of Elmer as a promotional tool met with mixed success. The second season brought in seventeen million visitors, roughly 75% of the number who had come over the course of the first season. While Elmer’s face remained on promotional materials throughout the second season, the actors who played him were fired in June 1940, with the majority of the second season remaining. Elmer’s mixed reception reflects

the central conflict of the Fair itself. While it sought to simplify its message and celebrate American values of kindness, honesty, and decency, it was also trying to sell Americans a radically different future in which the role those values would play was unclear. In addition, the Fair’s emphasis on the American past while war took hold in Europe made the Fair seem nostalgic and passé. In its attempt to distract people from reality, the Fair ultimately underscored its own distance from reality even further. As *Life* noted, “The 1940 Fair is a World of Escape.”¹⁷

¹Jessica Weglein et al. “New York World’s Fair 1939 and 1940 Incorporated Records” MssCol2233, last modified June 2008, <http://www.michelle.koenig-schwartz.com/media/nywf39fa.pdf>

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¹⁷“1940 Fair Features Fun and Folksy Informal Charm,” *Life*, May 27, 1940, 32.

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2.7.

Deconstructing the Unisphere: Hip-Hop on a Shrinking Globe in an Expanding Universe

Nettrice R. Gaskins

The 1964–65 New York World’s Fair (NYWF) opened on April 21, 1964 for two six-month seasons concluding on October 21, 1965. Occupying nearly a square mile of real estate in Flushing Meadows-Corona Park in Queens, New York, it was the largest world’s fair ever held in the United States. Celebrating itself as a “universal and international” exposition, the Fair was dedicated to “Man’s Achievement on a Shrinking Globe in an Expanding Universe.” Commissioned to celebrate the beginning of the “Space Age,” a twelve-story high, stainless steel model of the Earth called the Unisphere was conceived and constructed as the theme symbol of the Fair, to promote “Peace Through Understanding” and capture the public’s avid interest in the rapid advances being made in rocketry, materials science, computer and information technology.¹ These events coincided with the end of Second Great Migration of African Americans from the South to the North that resulted in the growth of a highly urbanized population in Queens and other boroughs of New York City.² The 1964–65 NYWF took place during a time of social and political upheaval, as well as scientific and technological progress. This chapter will show how these events and specific technical artifacts built for World’s Fairs made a lasting impression on the urban dwellers that encountered them—i.e. the lasting image of the Unisphere. Some of these objects would remain at the site beyond the conclusion of the Fair, becoming a stage for popular media forms in urban art and culture developed in inner cities, made popular through commercialization.



Figure 1. The Unisphere, from the northwest.

Langdon Winner (1980) notes that technical artifacts such as machines, structures, and systems of modern material culture have political qualities. This includes their contributions to efficiency and productivity; positive and negative environmental side effects; and how they embody types of power and authority. In Winner’s view, “what matters is not technology itself, but the social (political) or economic system in which it is embedded.”³ Master builder of

the 1964–65 NYWF Robert Moses’ careful manipulation of legislatures, banks, labor unions, the press, and public opinion led to the most enduring results of his work: his public works and vast engineering projects. With Moses at the helm NYWF officials commissioned the construction of the Unisphere by the United States Steel Corporation. Moses hired Gilmore D. Clarke to modify his 1939 World’s Fair plan for the NYWF, placing the Unisphere in a prominent position where it remains to this day. Ironically, Moses was known to deliberately design and build public works around New York City based on his social class bias and racial prejudice.⁴ *Daily Gotham* blogger Michael Bouldin writes,

Moses segregated previously integrated neighborhoods. The parkways leading out to the open air, the ones he built while starving mass transit, feature pretty little bridges built so low that no buses can use them, cutting off the poor (read: the black) from this bounty. Robert Moses’ racism permeates literally all he has done. Along the way, he engaged in staggering acts of corruption that would be impossible today...⁵

Low-income residents and African Americans, who normally used public transit, were kept off the roads and out of public beaches and parks because the buses that transported them around the city were too tall to pass under the overpasses built by Moses to get to these areas. Developments such as this cast a shadow over the 1964–65 NYWF. On the opening day of the Fair, New York civil rights activists held a controversial “stall in” on the expressway leading to Flushing Meadows-Corona Park. According to historian Brian J. Purnell, in July 1963, black journalist Louis Lomax told an audience of 1000, “Imagine the confusion which might result if 500 people get in their cars, drive towards the Fair grounds, and run out of gas.”⁶ Local activists determined that this form of protest was the only way to transform a power structure that disadvantaged African and Latino American citizens. The conservative nature of the Fair’s entertainment stood in stark contrast to the era’s political revolution, while the lack of an African American presence at the fair appeared very much out of step with civil rights advances. In spite of this, the popular memory of the NYWF sparked imaginations and reshaped people’s vision of the world. This chapter explores how the site of the NYWF later became a trendy location for urban production. Here, the approach is to position this production within a specific theoretical and practical purview with which audiences may be familiar but which they may not have fully explored in cultural-historical discourse.

THE SPACE AGE AND AFROFUTURISM

The Space Age began with the launch of Sputnik 1 by the Soviet Union in 1957 and ushered in a new era of political, scientific and technological achievements. It was the space race that was the genesis for the Seattle World’s Fair in 1962 and this vision was challenged two years later.⁷ The ‘64/’65 NYWF’s twin themes “Man’s Achievements in an Expanding Universe” and “A Millennium of Progress” celebrated the boundless potential of science and technology for human betterment. As a main exhibition, the United States Space Park showcased new technological frontiers and responded to America’s fascination with space travel and living during the Cold War.⁸ In this two-acre park visitors could explore a vast

collection of rockets and other related artifacts. In the Hall of Education, next to Space Park, multimedia space exhibits were on view. There, visitors could watch two space vehicles “Rendezvous in Space” and inside the Moon Dome in the Transportation and Travel pavilion, audiences were encircled by a Cinerama screen showing “To the Moon and Beyond.”⁹ Between Seattle ‘62 and New York ‘64 the space craze grew in popularity due, in part, to the Hanna-Barbera produced animated TV sitcom *The Jetsons*. The show imagined life in a futuristic utopia that consisted of elaborate robotic contraptions, aliens, holograms, and other inventions.¹⁰ Populux and Googie architecture,¹¹ characterized by Space Age designs depicting motion, such as boomerangs, flying saucers, atoms, parabolas, and free-form designs, were on view in both the Seattle and New York World’s Fairs.

Throughout this period, artists and builders paid scant attention to one another’s work, but Gilles Deleuze developed a philosophical idea that can be used to investigate the particular effects of technical artifacts such as the Unisphere, the centerpiece of the 1964–65 NYWF, on creative production in the inner city. The Space Age as a “plane of immanence” can be defined by its “intersections with other concepts, both in its field and in surrounding fields.”¹² Artifacts like the Unisphere exist as points on a logical, political, aesthetic and cultural plane. This allows us to look more closely at these objects and other contexts in which these objects are situated. The presence of the Unisphere is a modern example of a *Zeitgeist*, or spirit of the age effect that represented a shift in social, cultural and political awareness. This object did not simply exist in the confines of Flushing Meadows-Corona Park, but it amplified from that location, functioning and operating upon those who experienced it, immanently mapping its environment, discovering its powers and relations (and relative limits of those powers and relations). This idea of a symbol or object transcending its immanence resonates with Afrofuturism, an aesthetic that combines elements of science fiction, science/engineering, fantasy, Afrocentricity, and magical realism with non-Western cosmologies in order to critique, revise, interrogate, and re-examine historical events. Decades later, people whose ideas (and presence) were largely missing from the NYWF carried the Fair’s themes, creating in the process new ways to represent power and progress.

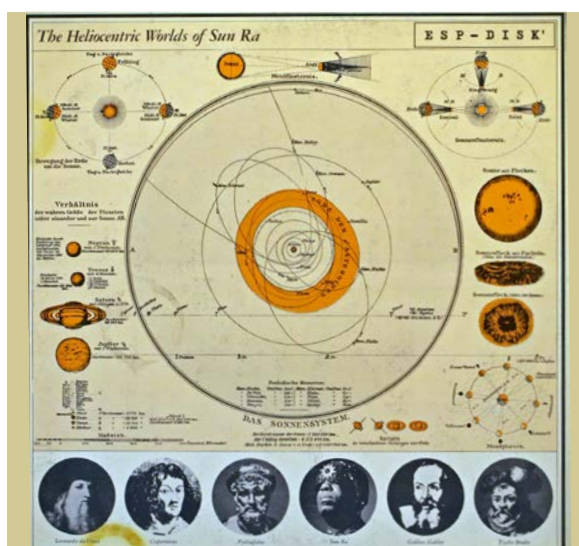


Figure 2. The Heliocentric Worlds of Sun Ra, Volume Two - Sun Ra (1965).

In the early 1950s jazz musician Sun Ra, the father of Afrofuturism, abandoned his birth name, developed a complex persona using cosmic philosophies and lyrical poetry, and began preaching awareness and peace.¹³ Sun Ra presented a unified conception, incorporating music, myth, and performance into his multi-levelled equations (philosophies). Sun Ra’s view of space influenced later generations of artists and musicians. By one account, Sun Ra was well aware of the 1964–65 NYWF. According to Lewis, Sun Ra “suggested

they go” there in ’64, making it highly likely that his life altering “trip to Saturn” was meant to coincide with the space race and world’s fairs of the 1960s. Sun Ra’s talk of space travel and transcendence through jazz music pulled together several strands of Afrofuturism, as an act of personal mythology. Psychedelic funk music legend George Clinton and his group Parliament-Funakadelic (P-Funk), inspired by Sun Ra, conceived of the ‘Mothership’ as a way to re-appropriate the image of the slave ship.¹⁴ “The Mothership Connection” (1975) draws on imagery linking African Americans and space travel initiated by Sun Ra that is important for Afrofuturism. Describing the album, George Clinton says,

We had put black people in situations nobody ever thought they would be in, like the White House. I figured another place you wouldn’t think black people would be was in outer space. I was a big fan of Star Trek, so we did a thing with a pimp sitting in a spaceship shaped like a Cadillac, and we did all these James Brown-type grooves, but with street talk and ghetto slang.¹⁵

What was emerging during the late 1960s and early 1970s was what scholar Cornell West calls the “new cultural politics of difference” that intertwined with social and political revolutions.¹⁶ In West’s view the distinct articulations of the privileged can become aligned with urban cultural practitioners seeking to empower themselves through production. African Americans and other groups, mostly from under-resourced, urban communities in and around New York City used art to re-appropriate (sample) technical objects and media as a way to reposition themselves, figuratively, as performers on the world stage. This was a time in which African American cultural production began to displace European models of high culture, recognize the global cultural marketplace, and explore multiple methods for the construction of subjectivities across geographies, class, sexualities, and race. These developments countered racist, imperialist propaganda and exclusion that has been noted by scholars.¹⁷ On the other hand, the alignment of privileged and underprivileged groups created interdependence and, arguably a false sense of empowerment for urban artists. This is especially true for entertainers whose desire for economic materialism superseded authentic power.

PLANET ROCK, SAMPLING THE SPACE AGE & DECONSTRUCTING THE UNISPHERE

Deleuze’s philosophical framework (used here to embed Afrofuturism in the Space Age era) allows us to see a clear progression from Sun Ra to P-Funk, electrofunk/disco and hip-hop, as part of Afrofuturistic cultural production juxtaposed with the 1960s world’s fairs as a way to uncover striking parallels in the histories of the two domains. In the 1980s hip-hop pioneer Afrika Bambaataa extended the Sun Ra and P-Funk mythologies to push hip-hop along as a cultural movement. Bambaataa created a science fiction perspective as part of hip-hop culture by ushering in the space age, electro-funk hit, “Planet Rock” in 1982. Born in Bronx, New York in 1960, Bambaataa was perhaps too young to fully experience the NYWF but the influence of the Space Age on hip-hop artists is prevalent in early music and music videos.¹⁸ Practitioners like Bambaataa sampled, appropriated and re-appropriated this imagery as part of Afrofuturistic cultural production. This work makes clear reference to spaceships and space travel, i.e. TV shows like *The Jetsons* and *Star Trek*, with African

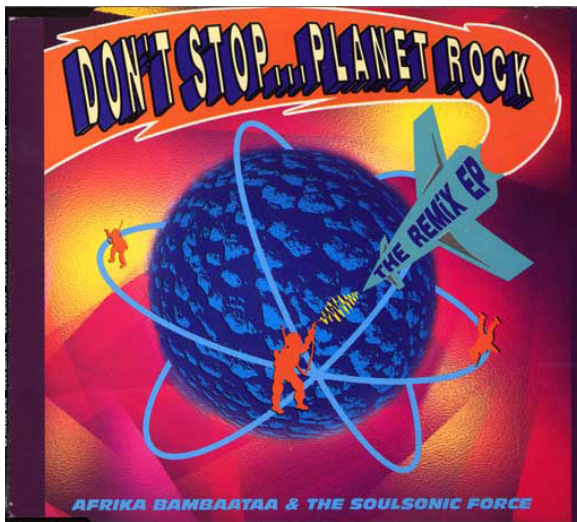


Figure 3. Afrika Bambaataa & The Soulsonic Force. Don't Stop... Planet Rock - The Remix EP (1992).

mythology, history, and African-inspired music genres such as soul and funk.¹⁹ Afrika Bambaataa, who grew up in the streets of New York City, found inspiration in the music technology and style of European groups like Kraftwerk and in P-Funk stage shows (circa 1976) that landed the Mothership. The image of a spaceship landing on a three-ringed planet (the Unisphere) appears in cover art for a “Planet Rock” remix album.

Black British theorist Stuart Hall cites three impulses in black diasporan creativity²⁰ that I will take up here in relation to Afrofuturism in hip-hop: the importance of

“style” as a subject; the importance of African/black music and rhythm as a foundation of deep structure; and the importance of dance and the body to the formation of social knowledge among black people. These motivations can be viewed in relation to hip-hop and its emergence as a black cultural practice in the late 1970s. In hip-hop there is an ongoing debate about the importance of style over technique or vice versus. According to author Mark Dery an emergent ontological parallax occurs when the historical plight of African-Americans is coupled with a bricolage of futuristic techniques to create art.²¹ Afrofuturistic cultural production often reflects an awareness of the global marketplace and objects or symbols that embody both visual blackness, and its corporeal memory of the Middle Passage as the birth of modern existence, and emergent technology.²²

Parliament/Funkadelic fit into a postindustrial aesthetic project to propel black Americans toward a digital future where musical performance and technology collide, suture, and produce an impossible but undeniable synergy. If these songs sound fresh to contemporary ears, it may be in some part because they emerge at the edge of what we can call Afrofuturism, or the radical re-assembly of black musical practice through technology. Afrika Bambaataa and the Soul Sonic Force bridged the electrofunk/disco aesthetic and hip-hop production. Thus, the Space Age was passed along through music and other artistic and cultural forms. According to Thomas F. DeFrantz hip-hop represents a significant cultural shift enabled by technology in the post-industrial age, when the production process of black popular music changed dramatically from the late 1960s to the 1980s.²³

The Unisphere was abandoned after 1965 and largely neglected until its rehabilitation in the late 1980s and early '90s when it became one of the city's most iconic and enduring symbols.²⁴ During the period of its restoration the Unisphere became a backdrop for many hip-hop projects including on The Beastie Boys' *Licensed to Ill* album cover, in the music videos for Craig Mack's “Flava in Ya Ear,” A Tribe Called Quest's “Award Tour,” and M.O.P.'s “World Famous.” These examples are visual ethnographies of place: capturing both the

scene and some of the dynamism of the artists and their culture. This period also coincides with the golden era of hip-hop when the rise of urban culture in mainstream media—i.e. break dancing, rap and electronic music, turntablism and other activities made popular through commercialization—dispersed creative expression and artistic subcultural forms that originated in urban communities throughout the world. In the '90s certain aspects of this production emptied, or deconstructed artifacts such as the Unisphere—which is readily recognized—and the context in which these objects were created in order to construct new meanings in ways that reflect the worldly, ostentatious lifestyles in popular hip-hop culture, i.e. during the “bling” era.



Figure 4. Craig Mack, Flava In Ya Ear - production still (1994).

Craig Mack’s “Flava in Ya Ear” (1994) picks up where Bambaataa’s “Planet Rock” left off. The original song, widely regarded today as a hip-hop classic, makes several references to the Space Age—i.e. “The Jetsons,” robots, holograms, and so on. In the music video for the hit single, Craig Mack performed at Flushing Meadows-Corona Park, the site of the 1964–65 NYWF. The video was an early effort for director Hype Williams who began making music videos in the early 1990s after writing graffiti and a brief career in graphic design.²⁵ Williams uses the site as a backdrop to capture some of the particular effects of the object, without any of the original political qualities. “Flava in Ya Ear,” signals the beginning of the “bling-bling,” or “bling” era in hip-hop with its flashy, ostentatious and elaborate accessories and materialism. Contemporary hip-hop culture, no longer localized or geolocated in the inner city became a global phenomenon. Hype Williams went on to invigorate the music video industry by using innovative technical processes that evoked bling—the “sound” of light hitting silver, platinum, or jewels—that complemented precise digital hip-hop music production.²⁶ Williams continues to direct popular music videos and films using his trademarked style and Afrofuturist aesthetic.



Figure 5. Talib Kweli. In this World - production still (2010).

Today, the Unisphere still represents progress, albeit a different kind that reflects popular culture and the meteoric rise of hip hop itself, which led to popular urban artists becoming mainstream pop music icons. Perhaps not on the same scale, this feat of achievement can be compared and contrasted with the effort it took to build the Unisphere, itself, i.e. constructing the satellite orbit rings that circle the object (Earth). According to the United States Steel Corporation,²⁷ each ring weighed a ton, was 450 feet around and needed to be lifted by four cranes using a complex communication network. The three large orbit rings of stainless steel that encircle the sphere at various angles are said to represent Yuri Gagarin, the first man in space, John Glenn, the first American to orbit the Earth, and Telstar, the first active communications satellite.²⁸ Today, with the power of the Internet, urban artists and their work have become more visible to a global audience, and in turn more respected and known in popular culture. The Unisphere satellite orbits were highlighted in 2010 music video, “In this World” by rapper Talib Kweli and DJ/turntablist Hi-Tek. The song and lyrics challenge the materialism of the previous decade with a contemporary, more practical view of urban life.

Welcome to my longitude and latitude, my attitude
Is shaping my surroundings, skyscrapers, public housing
The sheep is running from the sun, the wolves is howling at the moon
It's tragic how you in the street cause you ain't got no avenues
When it come to rapping who's the baddest dude? (In this world)

The music video features a virtual, three-dimensional simulation of the Unisphere in which director Punit Dhesi and visual effects editor Steven Tapia replace the sphere (Earth) with the rapper/artist Talib Kweli, himself. Animated, particle-based rings orbit the rapper as he performs. Once again, we see a rapper performing at the site of the 1964–65 NYWF. However, whereas Craig Mack performed “Flava in Ya Ear” in front of the Unisphere, “In this World” successfully captures the ‘essence’ of the artifact to give form to an idea of what it means to be black in the post-bling era. By tracing the orbit of the Unisphere and

simulating its motion around the performer (Kweli) the effect re-interprets the symbol as an act of showcasing the once excluded urban dweller within the structure or system in which both symbol/dweller is embedded. Thus, the urban artist moves to the center of the world stage. This act of inclusion through transcendence of immanence moves its subject from the position of less importance to that of someone that has power over his/her own world.

CONCLUSION

Day and night, the vast communication network of the Internet passes packets of data around planet Earth in an unending stream to feed marketplaces that thrive by connecting people from disparate locations. Here, "Man's Achievements on a Shrinking Globe in an Expanding Universe," a vision of the 1964-65 World's Fair has been realized. Since early times industrial World's Fairs have been a gathering place where people came to trade, exchange ideas and celebrate their achievements and aspirations. Although African Americans were not a part of the design, construction or exhibition of (or participation at) these expositions they have found ways to use what remains of them as a stage for creative production and performance and (in the case of the Unisphere) as a symbol of empowerment and transcendence. Deconstruction of the Unisphere, if we refer to Derrida, can be described as an effort to understand an idea such as progress through its relationships to various contexts. The Unisphere remains as a symbol of human progress, although the idea of progress continues to change according to the social, political, or economic systems in which both the subject and object are embedded. In the more recent examples such as hip-hop music videos the Unisphere is no longer central. It exists in the background, or the physical properties of the object disappear entirely. It has become a figurative representation of urban living and of the increasingly global relationships of culture, people, and economic activity.

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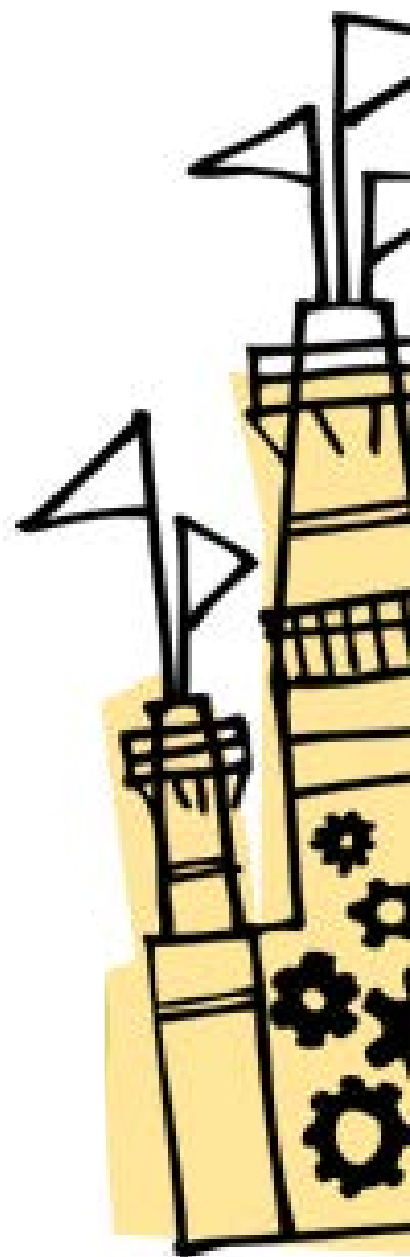
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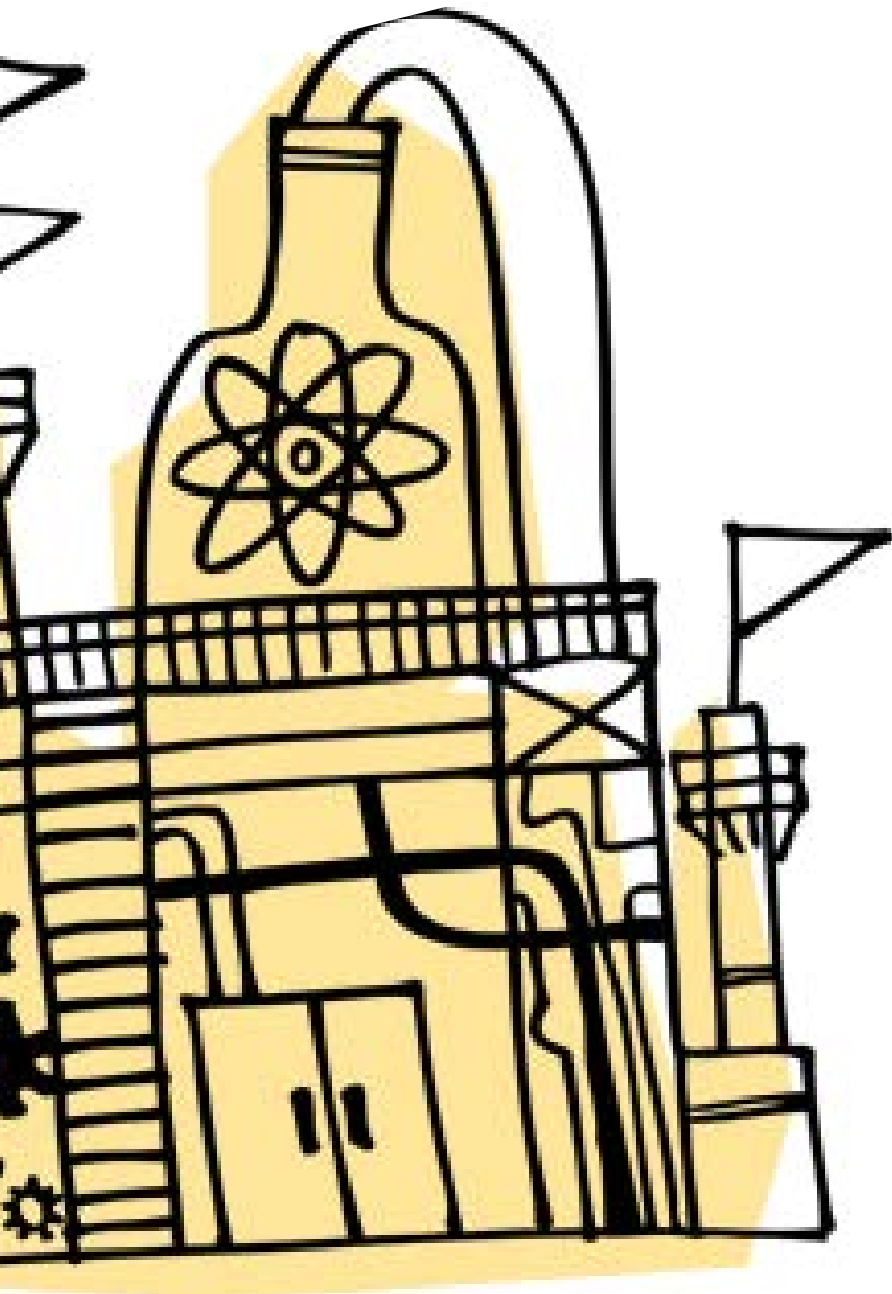
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SCIENCE & INDUSTRY PAVILION

SECTION 3



3.1.

“An Unhappy Rivalry: Art and Industry at the 1855 Exposition Universelle in Paris”

Katie Hornstein

The Exposition Universelle of 1855, held in Paris, France, was the first European world’s fair to combine an exhibition of industrial products from around the globe with an exhibition of works of art submitted by participating nations, including France.¹ The French government’s decision to show industrial products concurrently with fine art was an attempt to outshine the Great Exhibition held in London in 1851, which had only admitted those works of art, including sculpture, that were “connected with mechanical processes”. If the Great Exhibition’s focus on industrial products reflected England’s status as Europe’s most industrialized nation, France’s exhibition, according to an official French government decree, would show how “the perfections of industry are inextricably tied to the fine arts”² and stake a claim for France’s artistic as well as industrial eminence on the world stage. While certainly not intended by the French government to be a competition between art and industry, many contemporary commentators nevertheless understood the 1855 Exposition Universelle as a demonstration of industry’s new preeminence over all other forms of cultural production, including the arts.

The decision to feature twin exhibitions of artworks as well as industrial products brought together two realms of cultural production that had traditionally been exhibited apart from one another in France. Salon exhibitions of government-sponsored fine art were held with regularity in the hallowed galleries of the Louvre since 1737; they were overseen by the official arbiter of French artistic production, the Académie des Beaux-Arts, which was founded in the seventeenth century.³ These official fine art exhibitions carried with them a historical and institutional legitimacy that France’s industrial exhibitions, which began in 1798 as a display of industrial products on the Champ de Mars, did not. Intended to showcase and encourage France’s rising industrial economy, early nineteenth-century exhibitions of industrial products were held semi-regularly in different locations around Paris, including the courtyard of the Louvre (1801, 1802), the galleries of the Louvre (1819, 1823, 1827) and the esplanade in front of the Invalides (1806).⁴ The lack of a dedicated building frequently necessitated the construction of temporary structures and underscored the haphazard nature of these early displays of industrial products. Nineteenth-century commentators often lamented their disorganization, with frequent complaints that the criteria for exhibiting products were not rigorous enough and that there were too many

frivolous objects on display that did not actually represent material evidence of industrial progress.⁵ To house the 1834 industrial exhibition, which opened days after the closure of the 1834 Salon exhibition in the Louvre, a series of four rectangular wooden pavilions were constructed at the Place de la Concorde (Fig. 1). They were taken down at the close of the exhibition, a fact bemoaned by many contemporary observers who championed the cause of creating a more enduring edifice for public displays of industrial products.⁶ The next industrial exhibition of 1839 relocated to the Champs-Élysées, where it would remain up through the Exposition Universelle of 1855.

To create a worthy architectural setting for France's first world's fair, the government formed a private company to build two different pavilions for the exhibitions of fine art and industrial products on the Champs-Élysées, the Palais des Beaux-Arts and the Palais de l'Industrie. Initial plans had been for the international fine arts exhibition to be held in the Louvre and run concurrently with the industrial exhibition on the Champs-Élysées. According to Patricia Mainardi, the decision to erect a new Palais des beaux-arts was made hastily by Napoleon III's Imperial Commission and took many artists unpleasantly by surprise.⁷ There were also extensive renovations being carried out on the Louvre at the time by Emperor Louis-Napoléon Bonaparte's official architect, Hector Lefuel: the construction work would have made it difficult to accommodate an international art exhibition on the scale of the one envisaged for the Exposition Universelle. Though the construction of the Palais des Beaux-Arts and the Palais de l'Industrie effectively continued the long-standing tradition of holding art and industrial exhibitions apart from one another, the differences between these two buildings also point to a shift in the values that informed such public displays. In a striking reversal of the architectural fortunes of art and industrial exhibitions, the Exposition Universelle of 1855 relegated the fine arts to an ephemeral building and bestowed the industrial products with a permanent and comparatively grander structure. The government's desire to concentrate all of the Exposition Universelle's attractions in one location at the bottom of the Champs-Élysées had necessitated the Salon's move into the provisional Palais des Beaux-Arts, which was to be demolished at the exhibition's close. The Palais de l'Industrie, on the other hand, was intended to be an enduring monument to France's industrial prowess (Fig. 2). Built of the costly and ultra-modern materials of glass and iron by the architect Jean-Marie-Victor Viel and the engineer Alexandre Barrault, the Palais de l'Industrie featured a forty-eight-meter triple nave and a lateral stone façade entrance that mimicked the form of a Roman triumphal arch. Though many critics faulted the Palais de l'Industrie for awkwardly combining classical architectural form with industrial materials, and for the overheated conditions of its interior during the hot summer months of the Exposition Universelle, the building nevertheless gave the industrial exhibition an aura of permanence and importance that it had not previously possessed. In another symbolic marker of this realignment of exhibitionary practices of art and industrial products, all Salon exhibitions after 1855 were held in the Palais de l'Industrie until it was demolished in 1897 to make room for the Grand Palais that was being built for the Exposition Universelle of 1900. One critic, in his opening description of the first Salon held in the Palais de l'Industrie in 1857, viewed the new space as an ominous sign that art had been

irreversibly eclipsed by industry: “Without a compass, art has allowed itself to be taken into the Palais de l’Industrie [...] it has entered and will no longer be exiting.”⁸

Though the fine arts and the industrial product exhibitions were given equal attention in the official literature of the 1855 Exposition Universelle, it was clear that each domain served remarkably different purposes: for the first time at a world’s fair, exhibitors of industrial products were permitted to affix prices to their wares, thus registering the rising importance of exchange value in expanding capitalist economies.⁹ While selling was officially banned inside the Palais de l’Industrie, visitors were given the opportunity to purchase these very same objects in a building designed expressly as a space of commerce, the Comptoirs de Vente, or sale booths. The large building, located on the grounds of the Exposition Universelle in convenient proximity to the Palais de l’Industrie, consisted of 1500 individual booths where manufacturers and retailers could sell their wares to a curious public. As one newspaper argued, the prohibition on purchasing the goods displayed inside of the official industrial exhibition meant that “we can only look and are unable to buy; this stimulates our desire but cannot satisfy it.” The newspaper’s enthusiasm for buying these goods could hardly be contained; it contended that the Comptoirs de Vente constituted a better form of the official industrial exhibition, one that could actually satiate the desire to consume these new wonders of contemporary industrial production: “it is there, incontestably, that Parisian commerce will focus itself during the entire season; it’s there where, every day, we all go to empty our wallets.”¹⁰

Contemporary sources often described the industrial exhibition in terms of the desire it generated in the minds of visitors to own the objects on display. Works of art, however, were exempt from such discussions. Unlike the industrial products, art in the Palais des Beaux-Arts could not show its price and was not available for purchase in a specially designated space. The official government report of the fair revealed that a group of foreign artists had petitioned the French government to affix prices to their works, only to have their requests denied.¹¹ Within the confines of the exhibition spaces, art’s value was set entirely apart from the value of industrially produced, commodified objects, which reflected a concerted effort on the part of the French government to keep art isolated from the pressures of pragmatic industrial utility. Despite such efforts to define the economic value of the industrial products against art’s priceless aesthetic value, contemporary commentators often understood them as trapped in an unhappy rivalry. The French illustrated newspaper, *L’Illustration*, which devoted several long articles to the Exposition Universelle, worried that the fine arts exhibition would inevitably fail to capture the public’s interest if it had to compete with the industrial exhibition:

A double competition has opened between art and industry. For the first, the bringing together of these two exhibitions is an upsetting circumstance. From the point of view of expectations, of the curiosity aroused within the public, one must recognize that industry prevails over art. The crowd carries itself to where there is life; and the life of modern peoples is principally in the creative forces of industry.¹²

L'illustration also bemoaned the fact that visitors had to buy two different tickets if they wanted to attend both exhibitions. They argued that the French government should have granted admission to the Palais des Beaux-Arts free of charge since there was no question that “[the arts] must be heartily encouraged and not left to conflict with the limits of each family’s budget.” The newspaper regretted “this sad test” that would “measure the taste of our time for the fine arts based on the total figure” of the profits generated from ticket sales.¹³

When these figures were finally released, the differences in attendance were as stark as *L'illustration* had feared: 3.6 million visitors purchased tickets to view the industrial products in the Palais de l’Industrie, whereas only 900,000 had entered the Palais des Beaux-Arts. This discrepancy would seem to confirm art’s increasing irrelevance in the face of public fascination with industrial products. But taken in the context of historical measures of Salon attendance, the figure of 900,000 attendees was very high, and suggests that the international fine arts exhibition in the Palais de Beaux-Arts was wildly successful.¹⁴ It is only in comparison to the larger number of attendees at the industrial exhibition that the public’s interest in the fine arts appeared low. In the end, the Exposition Universelle of 1855 may have exacerbated the perception of an increasing schism between art and industry, despite its stated intention to unify them through one magnificent national spectacle.



Figure 1. Charles Gavard, *Vue de la place de la Concorde et des bâtiments de l'exposition industrielle de 1833, 1835*. Steel engraving.



Figure 2. Max Berthelin, *Palais de l'industrie, coupe transversale*, 1854. Ink and watercolor.

¹Patricia Mainardi has shown that there were plans for a fine arts exhibition at the London Great Exhibition in 1851, but did not ultimately come to fruition. See Patricia Mainardi, *Art and Politics of the Second Empire: The Universal Expositions of 1855 and 1867* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), 29-30.

²"...les perfectionnements de l'industrie sont étroitement liés à ceux des beaux-arts." *Exposition des produits de l'industrie de toutes les nations 1855* (Paris : Commission impériale, 1855), iii.

³The Salon became a somewhat itinerant institution between 1849 and 1857, the point at which it was held regularly in the Palais de l'Industrie until the building's destruction in 1897. See Catherine Granger, *L'empereur et les arts: la liste civile de Napoléon III* (Paris : École nationale des chartes, 2005), 165.

⁴*Mémorial du commerce et de l'industrie: annales de la science et du droit commercial : recueil mensuel de législation, de science, de doctrine et de jurisprudences commerciales* (Paris : Bueaux du mémoiral du commerce, 1849), 225-27.

⁵See, for example, Alexandre-Edouard Baudrimont, *Dictionnaire de l'industrie manufacturière, commerciale et agricole*, vol. 2 (Bruxelles: Meline Cans et Compagnie, 1837) 358-59.

⁶A lengthy article that appeared in the arts journal *L'Artiste* in 1839 also called for a permanent structure to house industrial exhibitions and demanded that they be held at regular intervals. See "De l'exposition des produits de l'industrie," *L'Ariste* 2 (1839): 1-4.

⁷See Patricia Mainardi, *Art and Politics of the Second Empire*, 42-44.

⁸Théodore Laborieu, "Les beaux-arts en 1857," *L'art du dix-neuvième siècle*, 20 juin 1857, 97-98. "Le hasard est un peu frère de la Providence, en cela il est souvent un grand prophète ; voila pourquoi l'art, sans boussole, s'est laissé porter au Palais de l'Industrie ; cette fois, nous le disons avec toute la conviction dont nous sommes pénétrés, il y est entré pour n'y plus sortir."

⁹*Visites et études de S.A.I. le prince Napoléon au palais de l'industrie ou guide pratique et complet à l'Exposition*, vol. 1 (Paris: Perrotin Libraire-Editeur, 1855), 10.

¹⁰"Les comptoirs de vente de l'exposition," *Journal de l'Exposition Universelle*, 1 juin 1855, 3. "Le Palais de l'Industrie, en étalant ses richesses, ne sera qu'une « exposition » et non « une vente. »

Nous pourrions regarder seulement sans pouvoir acheter. Il excitera notre convoitise et ne pourra la satisfaire. C'était donc une heureuse idée d'établir, à côté même de l'Exposition Universelle, - de somptueux Comptoirs de Vente, - reproduisant l'Exposition elle-même. Cette idée, conçue par d'habiles et intelligents spéculateurs, a été mise à exécution avec une telle rapidité, que, déjà, les Comptoirs de Vente sont ouverts ; - c'est là, incontestablement, que le commerce de Paris va se concentrer pendant toute la saison ; c'est là que, chaque jour, nous irons tous vider nos escarcelles."

¹¹As a compromise, the prices of their works could be written down in a notebook that could be consulted by the public. Napoléon-Joseph Charles-Paul Bonaparte, *Rapport sur l'exposition universelle de 1855* (Paris : Imprimerie impériale, 1857), 39.

¹²*L'Illustration*, 2 juin 1855, 349. "Un double concours est ouvert à l'art et à l'industrie. Pour le premier c'est une circonstance fâcheuse que la coïncidence des deux expositions. Au point de vue de l'attente, de la curiosité excitée dans le public, il faut bien reconnaître que l'industrie prime l'art. La foule se porte là où est la vie ; et la vie des peuples modernes est principalement dans les forces créatrices de l'industrie."

¹³"Exposition universelle des beaux arts," in *L'Illustration*, 19 mai 1855, 318. "Il faut l'encourager largement et ne pas le mettre aux prises avec les restrictions du budget de chaque famille. Ce sera une triste épreuve à faire en vérité que celle d'estimer le plus ou moins de gout de notre époque pour les beaux arts d'après le chiffre total plus ou moins élève des recettes."

¹⁴While no definitive record of Salon attendance figures exists, eighteenth century Salons attracted between 100,000 and 200,000 visitors. The number of visitors steadily increased over the course of the nineteenth century, with 461,000 visitors attending the Salon of 1861. Relative to these numbers, the figure of 900,000 appears to be quite elevated. For Salon attendance figures for eighteenth-century Salon exhibitions see, Udolpho Van de Sandt, "Le salon de l'Académie de 1759 à 1781," in *Diderot et l'art de Boucher à David: les salons, 1759-1781* (Éditions de la Réunion des musées nationaux: Paris, 1984), 79-84. For 1861 figures, see the article in "Revue des beaux-arts," in *L'Illustration*, 6 avril 1861, 15.

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3.2.

Taking the Factory to the Fair

Allison C. Marsh

In 1892 the Libbey Glass Company was not on strong financial footing, having suffered dramatic swings in its balance sheet since moving its glassworks from New England to Toledo, Ohio. In a contentious effort to regain market share, President Edward Drummond Libbey invested \$100,000 in an exhibit at the Columbian World's Exposition, personally financing most of the venture.¹ But this was not simply a display of glassware. The Libbey Glass Company set up a fully functional factory on the Midway Plaisance, advertising "300 Employees constantly at work" and "5,000 visitors comfortably accommodated at any one time."² The exhibit showcased every aspect of glass making: blowing, cutting, spinning, weaving, engraving and decorating. It set the furnace and the workers in the center of a large circle with a railing set around the perimeter, allowing visitors to circulate around each work station while keeping them approximately twenty feet away from the workers at all times.

In addition to the miniature factory, Libbey created its own, self-proclaimed Crystal Palace—a room furnished entirely with objects manufactured in the spun glass department. Lights reflected through glass lampshades, illustrating the practical utility of glass fabric. Glass "tapisseries" covered the walls; glass decorations adorned the ceiling. The upholsterings of divans, chairs, ottomans and cushions were made out of glass cloth while colored glass neckties and bonnets demonstrated how one could have an entire wardrobe made of glass fabric. Reportedly, Princess Eulalia of Spain, so enamored with the spinning process, promptly commissioned a royal robe to be made of spun glass.³ The marketing opportunity was not lost on Libbey; the company secured the exclusive concession to manufacture and sell American glassware within the Exposition grounds. The admission fee to enter the factory (originally ten cents, later raised to twenty-five cents to ease demand) could be applied to any object in the glass shop. Fairgoers could purchase all types of glassware, from souvenir medallions to thirteen-piece ice cream sets. Visitors who wanted to personalize their memory could watch while their names were engraved on glassware produced on site.⁴ For the Libbey Glass Company, the investment at the Columbian Exposition was a success. Not only did the miniature factory turn a profit, the advertising benefit of souvenirs helped the company solidify their market share for years to come.

Despite a seeming novelty of having a factory at the fair, Libbey's fully functional glass factory was not in fact a unique style of exhibit at the Columbian Exposition. On the second floor of the Hide and Leather Building, a model shoe factory had 175 machines in full operation. A shoe could be measured to the foot, cut, sewed, and finished in fifteen minutes.⁵ The exhibit turned out 1,000 pairs of shoes per day, and visitors could witness every step of the operation from the cutting of the hide to the final inspection.⁶ The sewing machines used to stitch the leather shoes were provided by the Singer Manufacturing Company and were one of four separate exhibits staged by the company at the Exposition. Singer linked the quality goods its machines could produce with the quality of the machines themselves and included both factory tours and public demonstrations as part of its marketing strategy.

The 1893 World's Fair thus introduced visitors to a new exhibit design concept: the factory tour. No longer were the tremendous dynamos removed from their functional context. Fairgoers could witness the entire manufacturing process and end by purchasing finished goods. This exhibit design style was known as a process exhibit and quickly came to be seen as an ideal method for showcasing consumer goods. Process exhibits were a new medium by which both producers and consumers of goods could interact with the technology of manufacturing. They also evolved as a significant marketing tool precisely at the point when manufacturers were beginning to build brand identity for common goods.

Guidebooks publicly exclaimed the educational benefits by advising men, women, and children that they could "learn as much from these miniature mills and factories as by making a tour of the manufacturing centers of the United States."⁷ Whereas travel guides often romanticized visitors to the fairs as accomplished students who went to the Fair every morning and made a systematic study of some particular subject spending "three or four hours... asking questions, and making notes," as early as the Columbian Exposition engineers were cultivating a more cynical view of the typical fairgoer.⁸ In preparing exhibits for the Department of Electricity, one journal estimated that the visitors to the Columbian Exposition without technical knowledge or experience would outnumber those who possessed either by one thousand to one. Engineers lamented how newspapers sensationalized the supposed dangers of new technologies and recognized that it was "difficult to combat these impressions by arguments."⁹

In contrast to the gloomy outlook of the engineers, the budding field of public relations had a different take on the educational benefits of process exhibits. For them the benefit of showcasing a manufacturing process was not for the fairgoer to understand the technical details, but rather to instill a sense of confidence in the end product. Guides to exhibition design for world's fairs suggested that manufacturers of light goods set up their machines in order to showcase the number of processes required to manufacture their products. By highlighting the number of steps, manufacturers could illustrate the quality of their goods and justify the price of the final product. The process exhibit became a distinct form of advertising.

Exhibitors at World's Fairs quickly realized that the cost of a display did not usually offer immediate returns, and they saw the commercial goal of an Exposition as an opportunity for publicity rather than direct sales.¹⁰ As vehicles for publicity, exhibitors were in competition with each other to attract and sustain the attention of the fickle fairgoer. Despite some attempts at serious displays, exhibitors admitted that many visitors were simply “entertained by seeing the wheels go round.”¹¹

When Sir Lawrence Weaver published *Exhibitions and the Arts of Display* in 1925, a guide to exhibition design, he hoped to aid exhibitors in displaying their “vastly differing wares with success, not to one vague public, but to many classes of people visiting the Exhibition with varying intent and point of view.”¹² His advice on appealing to a wide audience was simple: avoid the “spirit of the museum.” In particular, Weaver argued in favor of the installation of a miniature factory. H. W. Waters echoed Weaver’s enthusiasm in his 1939 history of exhibitions when he noted that the “appeal created by the curiosity of the ‘What is it **doing**?’ is much stronger than that of the ‘What is it?’”¹³

In particular, Weaver encouraged food manufacturers, with their enticing smells, to set up model factories at fairs. Weaver’s advice stated:

The most gallant [exhibition display] is the installation of a miniature factory. It is the most interesting form of moving exhibit; it convinces the visitor of the purity of the product, for he can see with his own eyes of what pure materials and by what cleanly methods it is made. It is best of all when the product is such, say chocolates or biscuits, that he can forthwith buy and consume, or take away a small or even a substantial quantity... and no sort of publicity is so valuable to the exhibitor because the interest of the working process stamps the name of the product on the visitor’s mind more permanently than any printed publicity can do.¹⁴

In this short paragraph Weaver summarizes several basic tenets of how a miniature factory helped with public relations. He dictates the need for companies to capture the audience’s attention, appear to show transparency in what can be considered a mysterious product, and offer a souvenir for people to take home and remember the experience, and by extension the product and company. The Natural Food Company clearly already believed in the value of the miniature factory (see Fig. 1), inviting visitors to the 1904 Jamestown Exposition to see shredded wheat and Triscuit being made.



Figure 1. The Natural Food Co. proudly advertised that, “If you like SHREDDED WHEAT BUSCUIT you will like it better after seeing how it is made.” They also welcomed visitors to their factory at Niagara Falls, which they claimed to be the “cleanest, most hygienic food factory on the continent.”

The miniature factory did have some noticeable limitations. Some manufacturing processes could not be displayed simply due to exceptional noise or dust, offensive odors, or limitations due to equipment size or power needs. It was also very costly to install and run a model assembly line.¹⁵ Process exhibits required considerably more space than static exhibits, which increased the cost of the display. Companies also incurred expenses in dismantling the machinery in their home factory, transporting the equipment and raw materials to the Exposition, setting up and dismantling the display, and transporting and setting up the machinery again at the plant. Additionally, factories often suffered the loss of the normal production at the plant during their presence at the Fair.¹⁶ As a result, process exhibits of manufacturing were often limited to large, well-established companies or to industry conglomerations.

Perhaps the most elaborate examples of factories at the fairs were organized by the automobile industry. Two years after inaugurating the assembly line at his Highland Park plant, Henry Ford set a new standard for industrial exhibits with his working assembly line at the 1915 Pan-Pacific Fair, where a finished Model T rolled off the assembly line in front of the crowd every hour. Ford's working assembly line at the Pan-Pacific turned out between 18 and 25 Model Ts a day. Fairgoers were so eager to see the conveyor belt that exhibit manager Frank Vivian had to build barricades to keep the crowds a safe distance from the workers. Enthusiastic tourists lined up two hours before the exhibit opened simply to get a position at the front of the railing.¹⁷

When the gates opened at the 1933 Century of Progress Fair in Chicago, Ford was noticeably absent. General Motors had won approval from the fair's organizing committee to display a Chevrolet assembly line before Ford even submitted his plans to stage a revised encore of his 1915 assembly line. Without Ford as a competitor, GM stole the show (Fig. 2).¹⁸ The General Motors Building was the largest structure by a private exhibitor, with over 120,000 square feet. Designed by Albert Kahn, the exhibit hall had showrooms featuring displays of Buick, Oldsmobile, Chevrolet, Pontiac, Cadillac, and LaSalle cars; GM's household appliances and accessories; a research lab; a movie theater; artwork; gardens; and, of course, an assembly line.¹⁹



Figure 2. Crisp white uniforms at the General Motors 1933 pavilion project a professional image in contrast to the reality of a blue collar, assembly line wage earner.

The 420-foot by 90-foot Assembly Room was set below the main floor level. The balconies surrounding the assembly line served the dual purpose of elevating the fairgoers, which allowed them an overall view of the process, while at the same time keeping them physically separated from the workers. The Assembly Room boasted two parallel lines, one for the Fisher Body and one for the Chevrolet assembly. All of the employees wore spotlessly clean

uniforms, which reflected their job positions. The GM workers wore white jumpsuits and white hats while the engineers who performed the final tests at the end of the assembly line wore dark slacks, ties, and white lab coats.²⁰

When the Century of Progress fair was extended through 1934, Ford, which had staged its own expositions in Detroit and New York in 1933, built a dramatic pavilion. The Ford exhibit, anchored by the iconic gear motif of the Rotunda, was an instant success. It drew 76.9% of all fairgoers and beat General Motors' attendance records by a two to one margin.²¹ Walter Dorwin Teague, one of the foremost industrial designers and architects of the time, created the modernist pavilion not with a working assembly line, but rather with two-story high photomurals of selected scenes from the Rouge plant. In addition to the photos, a long exhibit hall that extended out from the rotunda featured dioramas, miniature models, and working examples of the production processes of Ford's suppliers. After the close of the Century of Progress Fair, Ford dismantled the Rotunda and moved it back to Detroit where it became a permanent visitor center and starting point for the Ford Rouge factory tours until it was destroyed by fire in 1962.

Ford's image-heavy exhibit in 1934 signaled a shift in corporate display techniques. American exhibits at world's fairs during the four decades between the 1893 Columbian Exposition and the Century of Progress in 1933-1934 showcased a maturation of corporate identity from one based on products to a self-conscious display of image. Corporate image building became less focused on the manufacturing process or assembly line and more focused on brand identification, paralleling the development of the advertising and public relations professions. The changes in exhibition design underpin the changing attitudes towards the purpose of the exhibits themselves. No longer were the educational benefits of exhibits touted; the factories gave way to entertainment.

¹Carl U. Fauster, *Libbey Glass since 1818: Pictorial History & Collector's Guide* (Toledo: Len Beach Press, 1979).

²Advertisement in *The Illustrated World's Fair* (Chicago: Illustrated World's Fairs Publishing Co., May 1893), p. xi, Reel 110, #5. Note on World's Fair sources: The Smithsonian Institution Libraries have microfilmed most of their World's Fair literature collection. The reels of microfilm referenced here can be found at the primary library at the National Museum of American History.

³*Libbey Glass Company World's Fair 1893*. Souvenir booklet. The Ward M. Canady Center for Special Collections, William S. Carlson Library / The University of Toledo, MSS -066, Box 10, 14.

⁴"The Great Libbey Glass Company at the World's Fair," *The Illustrated World's Fair*. Reel 110, #5, p. 502.

⁵*The Illustrated World's Fair*, vol. V, no. 30, p. 733, Reel 110, #5.

⁶*Photographic History of the World's Fair and Sketch of the City of Chicago* (Baltimore: R. H. Woodward and Co., 1893), p. 454, Reel 116, #4.

⁷*The Book of the Fair: An Historical and Descriptive Presentation of the World's Science, Art, and Industry, as Viewed through the Columbian Exposition at Chicago in 1893* (Chicago: Bancroft Co., 1895), Reel 99, # 6, pp. 323-4.

⁸"How to See the Fair," *The World's Work*. vol. 8, no. 4 (New York: Doubleday, Page, and Company, 1904), p. 5161, Reel 163, #1. Historians such as Roland Marchand have commented on the romanticized scholarly fairgoers using sources such as the trade magazine *Electrical World*.

⁹Webb, Herbert Laws. "How Can the Department of Electricity of the World's Columbian Exposition Best Serve the Electrical Interests?" *World's Fair Electrical Engineering* (February, 1893), 59-63.

¹⁰This idea is expressed in the 1893 article "How Can the Department of Electricity of the World's Columbian Exposition Best Serve the Electrical Interests?" by Herbert Laws Webb, but is reiterated in many later publications that advise on best practices for exhibiting at fairs, including Lawrence Weaver, *Exhibitions and the Arts of Display* (London: Country Life, Ltd., 1925), 5, and H.W. Waters, *History of Fairs and Expositions: Their Classification, Functions and Values*, (London, Canada: Reid Brothers & Company, Ltd., 1939), 89.

¹¹Weaver, *Exhibitions and the Arts of Display*, 52-53.

¹²*Ibid.*, 1.

¹³Waters, *History of Fairs and Expositions*, 92-93. Emphasis in the original.

¹⁴Weaver, *Exhibitions and the Arts of Display*, 52-53.

¹⁵*Ibid.*

¹⁶Waters, *History of Fairs and Expositions*, 92-93.

¹⁷Roland Marchand, *Creating the Corporate Soul: The Rise of Public Relations and Corporate Imagery in American Big Business* (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1998), 264-5.

¹⁸Marchand, *Creating the Corporate Soul*, 268-9.

¹⁹*What we saw in the General Motors Exhibit Building at a Century of Progress*, Exhibit brochure, c. 1933, pages not numbered.

²⁰*General Motors Exhibit Building*.

²¹Marchand, *Creating the Corporate Soul*, 268-9.

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3.3.

Fordism, Corporate Display, and the American Expositions of the 1930s

Lisa D. Schrenk

The 1930s saw a dramatic transformation in the way companies presented themselves to the public at world's fairs, events that have served as industrial showcases since the first international exposition held in London in 1851. Nowhere was this change more clearly illustrated than in the spectacular buildings sponsored by the major American automotive corporations. Ford and General Motors, and to a lesser extent Chrysler Motors, were in fierce competition with one another to attract visitors to their massive fair pavilions. All three companies commissioned buildings from well-established architects for the 1933-34 Century of Progress International Exposition, but later relied upon industrial designers not only to produce seductive exhibit designs but also the pavilions in which the displays were housed. As Ford and GM continued to try to outdo each other at these events and the influence of industrial designers grew, an evolution took place within the companies' corporate palaces. Exhibits intended mainly to educate consumers about the production of modern commercial products began to be replaced by ones that were designed primarily to reinforce brand recognition through elaborate rides and other entertaining features—a practice that influenced presentations sponsored by major non-automotive corporations which also exhibited at six world's fairs held in the United States in the years between the two world wars.¹

The first prominent automotive exhibit at an American world's fair was the Ford Motor Company display at the 1915 Panama Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco. Henry Ford, a pioneer of modern manufacturing techniques, introduced millions of people to the concept of mass production through the presentation of a fully functional Model-T assembly line in the Transportation Pavilion. One reporter recalled, "The crowds seem never to tire of watching a rear axle grow into a complete motor car."² The exhibit helped publicize this modern manufacturing practice.

Soon assembly lines were integrated into a wide range of industries. Ford's exposition presentation also led to the development of more sophisticated display techniques at later American fairs, most readily apparent in the automotive exhibits, as commercial

presentations moved away from the static displays of products popularized in the nineteenth century to more enticing and complex modern exhibits highlighting mass production and a growing consumer culture in the 1930s.

The publicity resulting from the 1915 exposition contributed to growing sales figures for Ford automobiles in subsequent years. By 1925 the company was producing approximately 10,000 Model T cars per day.³ However, by the mid-1920s the company's market share had slipped, due in part to Henry Ford's resistance to developing new models. It was primarily the rise of competition from other automotive companies, in particular General Motors whose Chevrolet became the best-selling car in 1927, that finally convinced Ford to introduced the Model A in that year.⁴

By the time organizers began constructing the 1933-34 Chicago's World's Fair, the practice of introducing yearly model changes as a means to increase sales was well established by Ford and other major players in the automotive industry. In fact, the concept of artificial obsolescence, in which corporations stimulated consumption in saturated markets through the promotion of new color choices or changes in styling, was quickly adopted in the 1930s for a wide variety of consumer goods ranging from typewriters to kitchen appliances.⁵

A Century of Progress was the first international exposition to be dominated by the display of these new modern, commercial products. Because it was held in the worst years of the Great Depression, most foreign governments were not in a position to invest the large sums of money required to construct grand national pavilions. Homegrown industries, however, were quick to fill the resulting void. Even though large American corporations, like foreign governments, were attempting to cope with the financial ramifications of the severe economic downturn, many companies foresaw potential long-term returns in exhibiting at the Chicago fair. As Harvey S. Firestone exclaimed, the event presented "a great opportunity for private enterprise to show its achievements to millions of people... [and] for industrial enterprises to publicize their goods and services."⁶ More broadly, the fair offered an ideal stage from which to launch a massive public relations campaign promoting the important role of industry in reviving the ailing economy. The fact that the fair's board of trustees was filled with leaders of Chicago's business community, including Robert R. McCormick (editor and publisher of the Chicago Tribune), Julius Rosenwald (chief executive officer of Sears, Roebuck and Company), and Philip K. Wrigley (of chewing gum fame), only reinforced the fact that the exposition was to be largely a commercial event.⁷ The result was a fairground dominated by corporate pavilions filled with seductive displays highlighting the production of new, modern commercial products that developed out of company-owned research laboratories.⁸

Commercial buildings at the exposition ranged from small souvenir stands to some of the largest pavilions on the fairgrounds. Various architectural forms were employed to meet the different agendas and goals of the sponsoring businesses. Some companies sought sleek, modern designs to convey a feeling of progress, while others, like Radio Flyer

and Time-Fortune, used prominent symbolic forms to advertise their commercial goods. A number of corporations, including Owens-Illinois and Masonite, sponsored buildings constructed out of their own products. Hundreds of other companies not in the financial position to fund their own buildings, presented displays in the General Exhibits Building or one of the other large, fair-owned thematic pavilions. Each attempted to stand out within the 84 linear miles of displays that were competing for fairgoers' attention.

Daniel Burham, Jr. and the other members of the exposition's board of directors who had visited various European expositions in the years leading up to the Chicago fair in search of novel ideas for their event, quickly realized that static exhibits were dead exhibits.⁹ It became clear that incorporating the concept of motion into displays, as was done by Ford in San Francisco, was the key to attracting and maintaining the interest of modern fairgoers. "People like to see wheels go 'round,'" according to General Manager Lenox Lohr at the opening of A Century of Progress. "There is motion or the suggestion of movement—progress—in all exhibits."¹⁰ Moving dioramas, movies, assembly lines, entertaining spectacles, and other exciting forms of dramatization became popular features at the fair.

Henry Ford had planned to construct a large corporate pavilion at A Century of Progress to house an automobile factory similar to the Model-T assembly line he had presented at the Panama-Pacific Exposition.¹¹ However, after discovering that General Motors had already signed a contract to build its own massive automotive assembly line at the fair, Ford boycotted the event and instead sponsored his own "Exposition of Progress," held in Detroit and then New York City in late 1933.¹²



Figure 1. General Motors Building at A Century of Progress.

The GM Pavilion, built in part to celebrate the company's 25th anniversary, was a great success. Huge throngs gathered in the orange, blue, and silver art deco-styled building designed by Albert Kahn to witness the complete manufacturing process of Chevrolets. From a second-story balcony promoted as being a fifth of a mile in length (but actually only 420 feet long), up to a thousand spectators at once could observe the 200 workmen below complete each step of the assembly process over and over again, as they produced a steady stream of automobiles that began with bare frames and upon completion were driven out of the building under their own power (Fig. 1).¹³

The assembly line was not the only dramatic feature in the General Motors pavilion. Under the building's 177-foot high tower was an imposing cathedral-like hall featuring "Precision," a sixteen-foot tall freestanding heroic sculpture of a skilled autoworker created by Swedish artist Carl Milles. General Motors originally planned to decorate the room with "Forge and Foundry", a massive 43' by 69' painting celebrating the beauty and utility of machinery by Mexican muralist Diego Rivera, but controversy over the inclusion of Lenin in his Rockefeller Center mural in New York City led the corporation to cancel the commission just before the artist was about to travel to Chicago to carry out the work.¹⁴ Other walls of the 120,000-square-foot pavilion were decorated with murals, including a series of 40 works painted by Axel Linus, Santiago Martínez Delgado, and Miklos Gasper that illustrated the contributions of various raw materials by individual states to the production of the company's automobiles. Elsewhere in the building murals showing manufacturing processes served as backdrops for wood sculptures of autoworkers in action by Swedish sculptor Carl Hallsthammar. Nine additional murals of inlaid wood were produced for the pavilion by German craftsman Matt Faussner.¹⁵

Off the central entrance hall were two large display rooms where fairgoers could inspect the latest models of GM vehicles. A major attraction of the North Hall was Chief Pontiac, a mechanical talking Indian who "breathed," and moved his head, eyes, and mouth while answering questions from fairgoers about the recently introduced Pontiac Economy Straight Eight engine.¹⁶ The North Hall also held the General Motors Research Laboratory exhibit, which included scientific demonstrations, such as the emission of prismatic light from a spectroscope and voice waves from an oscillograph, that were designed to educate the general public about some of the basic laws of science affecting industry.

FORD AT A CENTURY OF PROGRESS

A Century of Progress reopened for a second season in 1934 with a number of significant changes. The most prominent addition to the grounds was the massive Ford Building. The automotive magnate clearly realized his error in shunning the fair in 1933 after witnessing the extent of free publicity and goodwill that General Motors and the other corporations received as a result of their participation. Just as with the application of model changes and color options, Ford found that once again his company was trailing GM. When exposition organizers decided to reopen the event for a second season, he took full advantage of the

opportunity and “stole the show” by building the largest and most expensive corporate pavilion at the fair.¹⁷

On an eleven-acre site that had held a United States Army Camp and a village of American Indians the previous year, Ford spared no expense and built a spectacular pavilion filled with eye-catching exhibits that drew more than seventy-five percent of all visitors during the 1934 fair season.¹⁸

To design the building, he turned to Albert Kahn, as General Motors had done the year before. Kahn produced plans for a colossal pavilion that featured a 210-foot gear-shaped rotunda with projecting extensions to each side. To the north, an elongated section 550 feet in length was topped by large, widely spaced letters spelling out “Ford.” Influenced by the rise of streamlining, Kahn designed both the signage and the building as if attempting to make it easier for people to read the pavilion’s machine-age forms as they rapidly passed by in a speeding automobile. While the building’s color scheme was relatively plain (predominantly white, with accents of dark green, blue, and yellow), the pavilion presented the most lavish use of electric lighting at the exposition in 1934.¹⁹ The building incorporated over one hundred miles of electrical wire and at night emitted seven billion candlepower.²⁰

Henry Ford’s underlying goal in participating in the Chicago fair was to inspire fairgoers to explore new ideas, just as he had been motivated to build his first gas engine after viewing the gas-powered water pump motors on display at the 1893 World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago.²¹ In a carefully crafted attempt to educate fairgoers more completely on the total production process of his vehicles, as well as on the social and economic benefits of individual automobile ownership, the automaker hired industrial designer Walter Dorwin Teague to present “the fascinating story of the motor car” through the use of “graphic, entertaining forms” of display, while completely avoiding any appearance of direct selling tactics.²² To keep from duplicating the General Motors assembly-line exhibit, the designer developed an abstract dissection of the assembly process, borrowing many of the more successful theatrical forms of display that had appeared in other fair pavilions the previous season, including instructive dioramas, striking murals, full-scale animated working exhibits, motion pictures, and live performances. Teague strove to imbue all of the displays with a high level of dramatic presentation as he attempted “to give the public a feeling of intimacy with industry’s methods.”²³ He also introduced a sense of stylistic unity throughout the pavilion by applying a harmonious use of color and graphics to the building and its displays.²⁴

As in 1915, motion was a major factor in many of the Ford exhibits. Fairgoers were drawn to the rotunda’s “Court of the World” by a rotating globe twenty feet in diameter that identified the location of the company’s production plants around the world.²⁵

As with many other pavilions at the fair, Teague covered the interior walls of Kahn’s building with murals. Wanting to demonstrate the company’s commitment to progress,

he chose the medium of photography instead of painting. The twenty-eight twenty-foot-high, enlarged photographs created a 600-foot photomontage of the workings at Ford's River Rouge plant. Interspersed with the photographs was a series of maxims, such as "Progress Comes From Prosperity Built by Work... Done in Peace," expressing the paternal wisdom of Henry Ford.²⁶ On the floor below, sixty-seven vehicles from his personal collection, beginning with a replica of King Tutankhaman's chariot and ending with contemporary automobiles, illustrated the evolution of passenger travel.²⁷

To the right of the rotunda the gigantic Industrial Hall featured a second rotating sphere at its entrance that contained a series of dioramas. Reflecting Ford's central theme, "Man must go to the earth for all materials," the miniature scenes illustrated the major resources used in the production of automobiles.²⁸ Along both sides of the hall numerous dioramas, working models, relief maps, photographs, and trained lecturers dramatically traced the progress of raw materials, including iron, aluminum, rubber, asbestos, and, Ford's favorite, soybeans, from their original state to finished parts for a Ford V-8.²⁹ Motion was also a feature of one of the most popular exhibits in the room, the assembly and testing of speedometers. In a theater located adjacent to the main hall fairgoers could stop and watch the movie "Rhapsody in Steel," which featured a puckish hood-ornament imp who, through assorted antics, illustrated the various industries and operations involved in the creation of a Ford car.³⁰

Realizing the great popularity of exhibits that incorporated visitor participation, Ford built "Roads of the World," an outdoor driving venue designed to compete with the highly successful Chrysler Motors raceway show located nearby. Kahn's pavilion served as a backdrop for a large oval track comprised of sections of roadway built to resemble almost two dozen world famous thoroughfares ranging from the "earliest Roman roads to the smooth paved highways of today."³¹ Interested fairgoers could experience the various pavements by taking a four-minute ride around the loop in a Ford automobile. Nearby, within the beautifully landscaped Ford Gardens, an orchestra shell served as the setting for daily concerts and as a place for fairgoers to relax and reflect upon all of the wondrous exhibits they had experienced in the Ford Building.³²

POST CHICAGO EXPOSITIONS

Having reaped the benefits of exhibiting at A Century of Progress, many companies went on to construct pavilions and sponsor exhibits at later American world's fairs. Hoping to copy Chicago's success and revive their own local economies, San Diego, Dallas, Cleveland, San Francisco, and New York City all held major expositions in the later years of the 1930s. Most of the themes and presentation practices that emerged at A Century of Progress reappeared at these later fairs. Some displays were unboxed and reassembled without any notable modifications, while others were updated and refined. Business leaders and fair organizers also introduced new, more sophisticated corporate attractions, as exhibition designers built upon lessons learned in Chicago.

Henry Ford, in particular, was sold on the value of continued corporate participation in world's fairs. After the close of A Century of Progress, the Ford Motor Company reconstructed the rotunda of its pavilion in Dearborn, Michigan, directly across the street from the company's headquarters. Many of the exhibits created for the Chicago exposition went on permanent display inside. Those that still projected a "static conventional character" were transformed into compelling presentations by Teague, who continued to have a close relationship with Ford and its corporate leaders throughout the decade, including designing both buildings and exhibits for the automaker at later world fairs.³³

The Ford Motor Company constructed the largest and most expensive of the corporate pavilions at the 1935 California-Pacific International Exposition in San Diego and at the Texas Centennial Exposition, held in Dallas the following year.³⁴ Located prominently at the end of a long green space known as the "Palisades," the circular entrance tower of the Ford Building in San Diego, designed by Teague, recalled the gear-shaped rotunda of Albert Kahn's design for the company two years earlier in Chicago (Fig. 2).



Figure 2. Aerial view of the Ford Building at the 1935 California Pacific International Exposition showing the outdoor Ford Bowl performance space on the left and the Roads of the Pacific venue wrapping around the rear of the pavilion.

With its doughnut-shaped exhibit hall located behind the circular entrance, the new building symbolically formed the “8” of a Ford V-8 emblem in plan (a symbol also featured in the round garden courtyard).

While no other manufacturer of automobiles constructed a pavilion at the California exposition, all three of the major American automotive corporations sponsored halls at the Texas fair. Both the Chrysler and General Motors exhibits were housed in earlier buildings that had been updated for the event. Ford, however, built a new pavilion for its displays. Albert Kahn returned to design the building. His solution, with its rectangular form, strong vertical linear elements, and lack of rotunda, ironically was more reminiscent of Holabird and Root’s Chrysler Pavilion at A Century of Progress than of Kahn’s own earlier exposition design for Ford (Fig. 3).

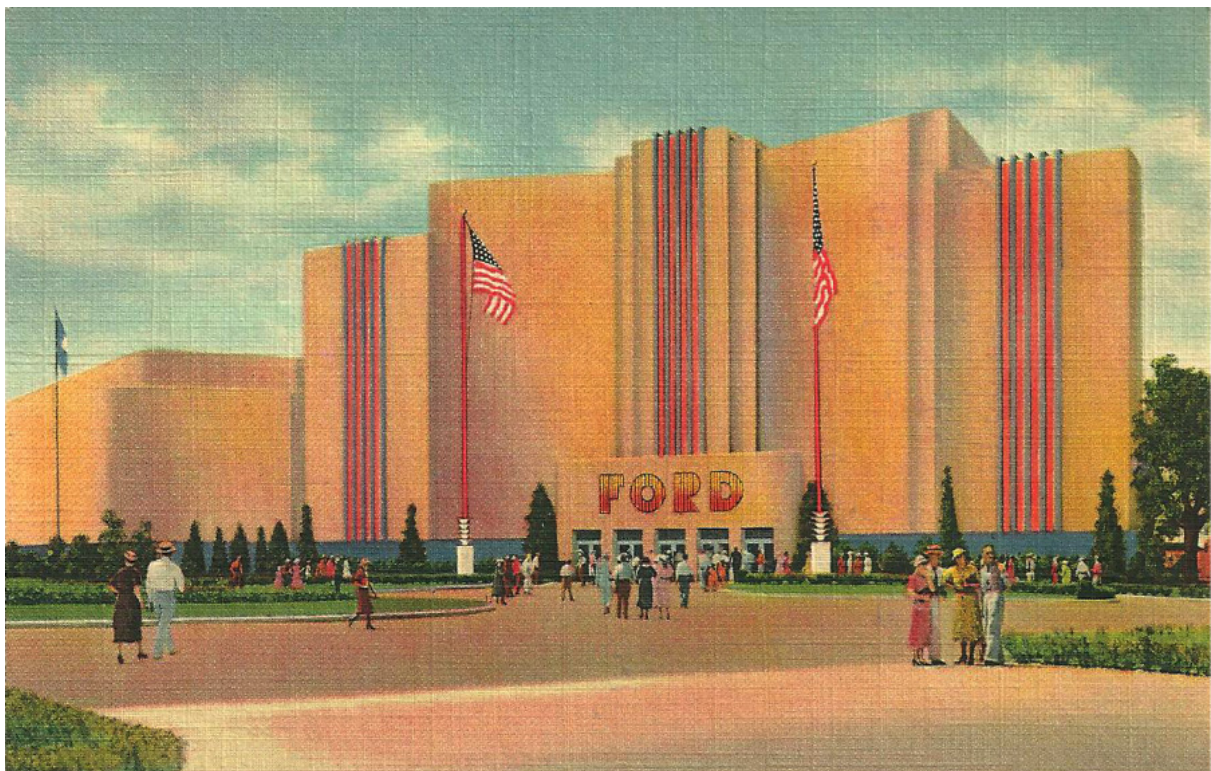


Figure 3. Postcard of the Ford Pavilion at the 1936 Texas Centennial Exposition.

The automaker hired Teague to produce the exhibits and interior designs for both its San Diego and Dallas pavilions. As at Chicago, the exhibits within the halls emphasized process rather than finished products. In San Diego the whole interior of the Ford Building was envisioned as a modern production line. Guides led fairgoers smoothly and efficiently past displays along the large circular corridor. To keep people moving continuously, recorded voices offered explanations of exhibits, thereby eliminating the need for interested visitors to pause and read detailed captions.³⁵ Painted murals and dioramas contributed an additional dimension to the displays. Along the upper half of the curved inner wall of the main hall, Mexican muralist Juan Larrinaga painted a 450-foot long mural entitled “The March Of Transportation”. Once again, giant photographs of the River Rouge plant and aphorisms by Henry Ford decorated the interior of the rotunda. “The Court of Nations”

display, which filled the hall, included dioramas depicting the production of raw materials used in the manufacture of Ford cars. In the center, a revolving hemisphere, recalling those found in the company's pavilion at A Century of Progress, contained a dozen additional dioramas illustrating the use of automobiles in different Pacific nations including the United States and Mexico.³⁶ Other exhibits in the building included mechanical presentations of automotive parts, demonstrations of assembly-line processes, and illustrations of the potential uses of soybeans in the manufacturing of automobiles. Both past and present models of Ford cars were also prominently displayed (Fig. 4).



Figure 4. The circular corridor of the Ford Building at the 1935 California Pacific International Exposition.

After the close of the 1935 fair season, workers in San Diego replaced the large letters spelling out “FORD” on the main building’s entrance tower with the word “TRANSPORTATION” as the pavilion was transformed into a generic “Palace of Transportation.” Like other corporations that had exhibited in San Diego in 1935, the Ford Motor Company shifted its focus and many of its exhibits to the Texas Centennial Exposition in Dallas, which opened in June 1936.

At both the California and Texas events, Ford sponsored exhibits located beyond the walls of its main pavilions through the construction of concert and entertainment venues. For instance, next door to the Ford Building in San Diego fairgoers could attend symphony

concerts in the Ford Bowl. Behind the pavilion was located the “Roads of the Pacific” attraction (both the Ford Bowl and road attraction are visible in Fig. 5). A Pacific version of the “Roads of the World” exhibit from Chicago, the California edition consisted of fourteen different sections of Pacific Rim roadways, including the Inca Highway in Peru, the Summer Palace Road in China, and the Oregon Trail. Over 500,000 fairgoers test-drove new Ford V-8s over the ever-changing pavement.³⁷ In Dallas, Ford presented a third version of the popular entertainment attraction, this time as the “Roads of the Southwest.”³⁸

In San Francisco at the 1939-40 exposition, Ford received its own building in the Court of the Pacific area, while Chrysler and General Motors exhibited within the Vacationland Building. The automakers’ presentations in San Francisco were not all that different from those of earlier fairs. Highlights in the Ford pavilion included a model service station and, in 1940, a quarter-size replica of the company’s wind tunnel, while General Motors exhibited a full-scale transparent Pontiac.³⁹

In contrast to the Golden Gate Exposition, which was more of a political exposition promoting Pacific unity and, more specifically, the United State’s paternalistic role in the region, the concurrent New York World’s Fair was a closer descendant of the corporate-dominated Chicago fair. Many companies looked to industrial designers, including Walter Dorwin Teague, Norman Bel Geddes, and Raymond Loewy, to plan their New York displays.⁴⁰ Because of Teague’s prominent position, the influence of his ideas on exhibiting could be found throughout the fairgrounds, especially his predilection for theatrical presentations of simplified messages over detailed explanations of scientific or technical processes.⁴¹

Even at the Ford Building, designed jointly by Albert Kahn and Teague, public education was no longer a perceptible central goal.⁴² Despite Henry Ford’s keen interest in schooling the masses, Teague reduced detailed concepts to seductive displays. The design of the pavilion itself reflected this change as the New York version of the outdoor roadway attraction, this time dubbed the “Roads of Tomorrow,” was dramatically elevated and incorporated into the design of Kahn’s massive fair building. Maintaining a connection with earlier Ford pavilions, the architect included a large rotunda entrance. Inside were two major features that developed directly out of Teague’s desire to entertain fairgoers at the cost of providing detailed information regarding the automaker’s products and developing technologies. The first was a towering, three-dimensional mural that, according to its creator muralist Henry Billings, was designed “not to instruct but to impress.”⁴³ Located in the entrance lobby, it was a mesmerizing work of kinetic art with flashing lights and whirling gears and pistons, abstractly expressing the dynamic power and mechanical production of a modern assembly line.



Figure 5. The Cyclorama of Production in the Ford Building at the New York World's Fair.

The other major highlight of the Ford Building, the 30-foot high “Cyclorama of Production,” consolidated the wide range of manufacturing exhibits that had appeared in the Industrial Hall of the company’s pavilion in Chicago into a unified rotating display (Fig. 5). Its basic form paid homage to the various revolving exhibits that Teague had produced at earlier expositions in order to draw fairgoers’ attention to the Ford exhibits. In a practice later used by Walt Disney for his *It’s a Small World* attraction at the 1964-65 New York World’s Fair, the Ford display consisted of eighty-seven groups of animated, cartoon-like figures demonstrating how twenty-seven different raw materials were used in the creation of Ford automobiles. As fairgoers viewed the display, a recorded voice instructed them in the wonders of mass production and its positive impact on the economy.⁴⁴

While Ford was able to dominate corporate exhibit displays at the fairs held immediately after *A Century of Progress*, General Motors once again eclipsed the company in New York. This time the company accomplished this through the creation of *Futurama*, an extravagant presentation that became the fair’s number one attraction.⁴⁵ Even Ford officials involved with the exposition confessed that they and their designers were completely outdone by GM.⁴⁶ *Futurama*, created by Norman Bel Geddes, was the largest and most expensive corporate presentation at the New York fair.⁴⁷ General Motors had initially just planned to revive its exhibit concept from Chicago by featuring an automotive assembly line, but Bel Geddes convinced corporate executives to allow him to present his own vision of the city of tomorrow.⁴⁸ Housed in a massive, smooth-sided, streamlined pavilion, *Futurama* presented fairgoers with images of an idealized vision of 1960 America. Sitting in moving chairs,

visitors experienced a series of three-dimensional animated models that gradually increased in scale and incorporated dramatic elements to control and heighten the experience.⁴⁹ After a fifteen-minute simulated airplane ride over a highly detailed model representing Bel Geddes's futuristic vision and including over two million individual buildings, fairgoers swooped down to receive a closer look at one urban intersection. In dramatic fashion, the chairs then swung around and visitors found themselves within a full-sized replica of the same intersection, which was brought to life by the presence of other fairgoers walking along the elevated walkways or leaning over the side to examine General Motors' latest models populating the roadway below. Each of the four modern buildings at the intersection housed other exhibits for visitors to explore before they finally received their souvenir "I have seen the future" pin.

CONCLUSION

An eighteen-year hiatus in the staging of world fairs during the mid-twentieth century prevented Ford from presenting a timely rebuttal to General Motor's Futurama. However, by the 1964-65 New York World's Fair, both corporations were once again building massive pavilions that housed revised versions of their dramatic automotive exhibits: Futurama II for GM and Walt Disney's Magic Skyride, a roadway trip through time, for Ford.

More recently, at Expo 2010 held in Shanghai, General Motors once again bested the absent Ford Corporation at the exhibition game. The SIAC-GM Pavilion, designed by Chinese architect Rong Wujie, was a crowd favorite. The building's spiraling recycled-aluminum façade symbolized modernity and the road to the future. As with GM's earlier Futurama exhibits, the company's main objective was to reinforce brand recognition and to promote itself as a progressive, forward-thinking corporation through the presentation of a sophisticated entertainment experience. The main feature of the pavilion was the "4-D" movie "2030, Xing!" which projected a seductive vision of driving in the future, free from petroleum, congestion, and crashes.⁵⁰ At the end of the movie the screens dramatically disappeared revealing a stage-show featuring acrobats and an assortment of GM concept vehicles (see Fig. 6). Upon leaving the pavilion, fairgoers could view the innovative cars up close, but unlike at many previous expositions, the venue lacked a test track where visitors could experience driving (or at least riding in) one of the state-of-the-art vehicles. Improvements in the financial health of the major American automotive corporations after the economic crisis of the early twenty first century, however, provide potential conditions for the Ford Corporation to once again compete with General Motors on the world stage by promoting its own innovative developments in transportation vehicles through exciting new forms of exhibit design, including possibly a twenty-first century edition of their popular roadway attraction, at a future international exposition.



Figure 6. SIAC-GM stage show with acrobats and concept vehicles.

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3.4.

The Past Was No Illusion

Walt Bransford

FOREWORD: REFLECTING ON THE PAST (BY CELIA PEARCE)

The following essay, written by a pioneering computer graphics practitioner, was originally published in 1997 as the opening chapter a volume of essays on the future of entertainment technology.¹ *Digital Illusion* featured numerous articles about state-of-the art computer-based entertainment innovations, from Habitat, the 1984 graphical online world that introduced the term “avatar” into the lexicon, to *DisneyQuest*, Disney’s early foray into high-end virtual reality. When invited to contribute to *Digital Illusion*, a collection about the future, architect Walt Bransford, who pioneered computer-aided design software for architects, chose instead to write about the past. More specifically, he chose to write about the history of world’s fairs. Why?

Given world’s fairs’ fall from grace, it is safe to say that at the time of the original publication of this essay, fairs were already a “thing of the past.” As Bransford himself points out, the 1984 New Orleans fair presented a turning point in the decline of the world’s fair as a prominent cultural form. Yet as this essay astutely reminds us, world’s fairs were a kind of crystal ball, giving us glimpses into our future. Numerous everyday technologies that we now take for granted as commonplace — trains, Ferris wheels, telephones — were introduced at world’s fairs. Fairs were centers for experimentation, “market testing” new ideas, and promoting new social agendas connected with the growing influence of technologies and corporations. A number of chapters in this volume also point out the darker side of world’s fairs and the numerous missteps, from egregious imperialist representations of race, to entire world’s fairs that were never built. These failures serve to remind us of the culturally situated nature of the “future” portrayed by world’s fairs, their particular positioning at specific points in history.

In some sense this essay presciently anticipates *Meet Me at the Fair* by reminding us that the future is always in flux. Bransford also reminds us that the future can often be read in the “tea leaves” of the past, and that we can gain a greater perspective by studying the “history of the future,” the ways in which our past imaginings of the future have influenced (or failed to influence) the current cultural landscape.

ARE WE REALLY AT THE FRONT OF THE LINE?

There's much to consider in the marriage of digital technology with the art of illusion, which has taken many forms over the ages. In creating fictions—whether through storytelling, writing, live performance, or still or moving images—space and time are elements upon which many illusions depend. Manipulations of either may be subtle or overwhelming, designed-in or an artifact of another goal. Many technologies of the recent past weren't created for the purpose of illusion but enabled new ways to perceive and interact with the world and with people. They were powerful—and often entertaining. These experiences stimulated the imagination, becoming a basis for new forms of entertainment products. One path spawns ten more, and opportunity follows new expectations. Many early attractions sold what we would now call simulation experiences. It's informative to look back at some inventions that blended the concepts of experience, immersion, illusion, interaction, and distribution, via the perceived manipulation of space and time. This chapter creates an illusion of its own: a trip back in history. There are hints back there—keys, secrets, and a character or two—which we can use today.

Film is one of the developments with prominent illusion and immersion components that were later exploited for entertainment, but thrills were delivered long before that in more mundane forms. Such thrills share certain traits; they provided an experience that many participants perceived as magical, transcendent, or at least very different. Many late nineteenth-century developments in transportation and electricity were practical but amazing for the time. They delivered experiences for diverse audiences, showcased new technologies, or used familiar technologies in new ways. They would soon affect nearly everyone's lives, stimulating our imagination, elevating our perceptions, and transforming our awareness of the world and of ourselves.

Entertainment is a product, just as are its foundation technologies. Its developers usually expect some return for their efforts beyond the satisfaction of creation. That return on the entertainment investment drives much of the evolution of our popular culture. Our step back into a colorful past will show that the art and science of high-tech illusion is a constant. We can anticipate continuous serendipitous discovery of new ways to combine new inventions.

GETTING THERE: UNBOUNDED IMMERSION

What is now thought of as early mechanized travel—railroad trains—stimulated the imagination of a nation. This immense moving object, propelled by a large, loud locomotive that seemed alive, brought the high-technology steam engine from the factory floor into near-direct contact with everyone in their everyday lives. Trains met practical necessities but were also a form of entertainment (and still are for rail fans of all ages worldwide). Rapid (30 miles per hour was fast in 1890) train transportation over yet-unassimilated landscapes was a vividly compelling experience.

In 1893, there were no movies showcasing a culture and its communities, no broadcast cultural norms, few widely available books about great American cities or the Majestic Land, and few travelogues for armchair journeys. This was the year of the Chicago World's Fair, and simply getting to Chicago was an event of unparalleled discovery. The expanding continental American rail network was just over 20 years old, providing for many people their first experience of moving across land faster than they or an animal could walk. This early conjoining of consumer and high technology challenged the imagination in many ways: One was immersed in a moving object with many other people, propelled by machine, and provided the collective experience of seeing the landscape of a huge, developing country in all its natural and man-made splendor. The associated anticipation, experience, and discovery of the trip itself combined to define a sense of place.

Comfortable and secure in these machines, early rail travelers encountered a new kind of territory. Portions of the personality of an emerging nation developed there. It was fertile ground for the imaginations of many, as they encountered shifting boundaries between reality and illusion. From this experience grew new forms of expression in American literature and art. It also helped spawn a technology-based industry of illusion for mass entertainment and education.

THE WORLD'S COLUMBIAN EXPOSITION AT CHICAGO: NEW EDGES OF IMAGINATION

By 1893, there had been several world's fairs, each a means of disseminating culture, technology, and architecture. But the World's Columbian Exposition at Chicago that summer was like no other before or since. Located 12 miles south of downtown Chicago on the shore of Lake Michigan and covering 633 acres, it was the largest fair to date and the first event of such magnitude in the Western Hemisphere. The timing of the fair as a punctuation in the establishment of American Culture offered extraordinary opportunities. America was adapting commercial, social, and cultural systems to an infrastructure that was the crowning achievement of the Industrial Era: maturing systems of mechanized farming, production, transportation, and early electrical communication.

The fair at Chicago was a showcase for technology, art, and entertainment. It was the world's introduction to America as a thriving Nation of Vision. It officially changed the perceived geographic center of the country—a sociospatial concept—from the East Coast to its actual location: a booming modern city, the gateway to a newly conquered Wild West frontier.

Just getting to the fair was an experience few could have anticipated (and many were probably ready to walk right back home). The Chicago Fair was a mass experience that packaged the familiar and the bewildering with a furiously developing future. It was palace, mud, and marble, plow and violin—a mind-expanding agitation soothed by the waves of

Lake Michigan. It was thousands of tiny experiences found by millions of visitors during two Chicago summers. The scale, diversity, and quantity of attractions and people provided a feast for the imagination.

IMMERSION IN A TECHNOLOGY SHOWCASE

As at all the preceding international expositions, new technologies were abundant. Huge steam-powered machines performed tasks never imagined—part of a parade of technology that was freeing people from relentlessly boring jobs and allowing them time for leisure. But steam power was becoming old news. At the fair, energy was converted from steam by a really new device: the steam-driven AC Electric Generator. Several electrical technologies were showcased at the fair. Extensive electric lighting introduced a spectacular nighttime experience across the immense spread of buildings, ponds, and grand promenades. Until then, night was a slice of time spent in an area no larger than what one sees, usually only several feet. Most people stayed home or slept. Society's concept of day really was over at night! Large-scale lighting at the fair opened new vistas and new shared spatial perceptions of the familiar. It is difficult to appreciate the impact of this now, but it was simultaneously bewildering and enchanting. And this was not electricity's only impact on space and time in its appearance at the Chicago Fair.

Transmission of information over long distances was not new; the telegraph was nearly 50 years old. It really shrank time and space; information traveled much faster than it could be carried. But at the Chicago fair, visitors were treated to long-distance telephone calls between Chicago and Boston and between Chicago and New York. Phones were connected to phonographs, concert halls, and opera houses on the East Coast. The great-grandparent of the fax machine made an appearance, too; Gray's Teleautograph transmitted handwriting by electricity. These were just as exciting and revolutionary at that moment as the mechanized transportation of people and goods had been a few decades earlier. What must it have been like to experience for the first time a human voice carried farther than the ear could hear? All these experiences with technology fired the imagination of the day much as the confluence of computers, interactivity, and the Internet does now.

ENTERTAINMENT AT THE FAIR: COLLISIONS OF CULTURES, VISTAS, AND MOTION

The Midway Plaisance was critical to the fair's solvency. It was a long, narrow strip of land extending for nearly a mile eastward from the main grounds, with the first separate entertainment area for a world's fair. Familiar forms of entertainment were abundant, along with many installations representing foreign countries. Time and space jumbled and jumped amid a crop of ancient and old-world village recreations, first tried at an earlier Paris world's fair and now alive on an immense scale. A night in Tunisia, a hot afternoon in Cairo, or a quick stop by The World Congress of Beauty by the International Dress and Costume Company could be had by all. The Panorama of the Bernese Alps was billed as an "electric theater" where light and sound effects combined with landscape paintings to create the illusion of

a mountain storm: Disneyland, a decade before Walt was born. This artificial fantasyland forever established the idea that leisure time could casually seek destination beyond one's home turf—a respite from the reality of what was still a difficult survival situation for many.

GOING UP

One thing didn't escape the view of anyone who came near the fair. At the center of the Midway, spinning in grandeur above the Midwestern plain, was a contraption that is now a fixture of the global language of fairs and theme parks: the world's first Ferris Wheel. It was designed and built (in eight months) by Pittsburgh engineer and bridge builder George W. Ferris. Rising nearly 270 feet in the air, it spun upon a 45-foot axle, the largest single piece of steel yet forged. It had 36 wood-veneered passenger cars, each the size of a bus and carrying 60 passengers—40 of whom sat on plush swivel chairs for the 20 minute ride of two revolutions. One compartment was reserved for a band, which provided full-time music to fair goers and wheel riders. For many, this was their first introduction to a view of mass human activity from a point higher than eye level. The Eiffel Tower at the Paris World's Fair of 1869 did much the same trick, but the Ferris wheel went further; not only was it surrounded by human activity, *it moved*. It offered a vivid experience of an environment just moments before absorbed on foot; it was another machine that called to question the normal arrangement of time and space. But unlike a train trip, this gizmo went up, over, under, and back around, delivering a remarkable view of the fair and nearby neighborhoods of Chicago. Just imagine a family fresh off the Iowa prairie, arriving days earlier on their first train trip, now experiencing the enchanting, surely pleasurable overload of a ride on the Ferris Wheel. Who can know what visions and dreams arose from these friendly and startling experiences with technology? The Ferris Wheel became the memory of the fair for many visitors. It survives today in local fairs everywhere—in an entertainment venue and cash machine called “The Midway.”

THE PARIS FAIR OF 1900: CHANGING CONTEXT, RISING EXPECTATIONS

By 1900, leisure time was a reality; people sought ways to spend their new leisure capital. Large-scale sports such as professional baseball and amusement parks on the scale of Coney Island were designed to meet this demand. The Paris World Exposition of 1900 meant to eclipse the popular successes of 1893 Chicago. More people knew about convenient travel and had seen pictures of faraway locales. Electric communications and print media brought news and views of the planet and its peoples to a knowledge-hungry populace. Milestones in illusion technology like the Trans-Siberian Railway Panorama, the Mareorama, and the Cineorama Air-Balloon Panorama were devised for the Paris fair to capitalize on this new awareness, leisure time, and leisure spending.

People had become accustomed to stationary dioramas and panoramas—they were common even at county fairs. The mountain storm simulation at the Chicago fair added electric lighting and sound. The Railway Panorama and Mareorama at Paris enlivened panoramas—as the Ferris Wheel enlivened towers—by introducing motion. Further, the

attractions were designed such that no two experiences were identical. These “rides” were elaborate, expensive, and, as is common today, developed and funded by corporations dealing in the real thing—a related product to sell. The Trans-Siberian Railway Panorama was built and sponsored by the Compagnie Internationale des Wagons-Lits, a major European railroad company. The designers wanted to deliver magic with the best in technology, but the medium was not just a showcase. It was illusion for illusion’s sake, riding on assumptions about the ability of the imagination to transcend the medium.

THE RAILWAY PANORAMA

This 45-minute experience was an essay in detail. It offered a chance to experience the 14-day journey by rail from Moscow to Peking, a 6,300-mile journey over tracks not yet completed at the time of the Paris fair. There were three realistic railway cars, each 70 feet long with saloons, dining rooms, bars, bedrooms, and other elements of a luxury train. Totally detailed and lavishly equipped, the cars were elevated a little above a place for spectators in conventional rows of seats. This gallery faced a stage-like area where the simulated views along the train trip were presented by an inventive contraption. The immediate reality of a vehicular trip is that nearby objects seem to pass by more rapidly than distant ones. So, nearest to the participants was a horizontal belt covered with sand, rocks, and boulders, driven at a speed of 1,000 feet per minute. Behind that was a low vertical screen painted with shrubs and brush, traveling at 400 feet per minute. A second, slightly higher screen, painted to show more distant scenery, scrolled along at 130 feet per minute. The most distant one, 25 feet tall and 350 feet long, painted with mountains, forests, clouds, and cities, moved at 16 feet per minute. Real geographical features along the way were depicted on this screen: Moscow, Omsk, Irkutsk, the shores of great lakes and rivers, the Great Wall of China, and Peking. The screens, moving in one direction only, were implemented as a belt system. Due to the inexact speeds of the scenery, the “journey” never repeated itself exactly, providing an ever-changing combination of scenes and a reason to pay to visit the attraction again.

THE MAREORAMA

The scenery in the Railway Panorama moved, but the spectator’s seats and the railway cars didn’t provide any motion cues. The Mareorama eliminated that shortcoming. An ingenious system provided movement to a ship-shaped platform, positioned between a pair of moving screens. Each was 2,500 feet long and four stories tall, painted by a team of artists working under Hugo d’Alesi, well known at the time for his beautiful vistas on the posters of railway and shipping companies. The 215,000 square feet of screen were rendered with scenes based on sketches made by d’Alesi during the real voyage that the Mareorama simulated. The extremely heavy cylinders holding the rolled-up screens were supported by floats in a water basin. A system of jacks, floats, hydraulic pistons, and pumps driven by electric motors moved the cylinders to roll and pitch the panoramas. This same mechanism controlled the motion of the spectator platform. As the platform rocked and the screen moved from one cylinder to another, the participant was treated to a simulated fair-weather, hazard-free voyage from Nice to Constantinople. What is important about

both the Railway Panorama and the Mareorama is that they were high-technology illusions as entertainment product. They were immersive and shared, just like the real things they simulated, and they were expensive, on a scale equivalent to theme park attractions today.

GOING UP AGAIN: THE CINEORAMA AIR-BALLOON PANORAMA

Similar quality, detail, contemporary high-tech tricks, and expectations were prominent in the final example of attractions at Paris in 1900—the Cineorama Air-Balloon Panorama. This blend of new technology and creativity may have been the first-ever ride-film attraction. The Air-Balloon Panorama took its cue from a then-novel invention: the hot air balloon. (Remember, this was a few years before the Wright brothers.) The thought of air travel must have strained the mind much more than imagining what it would be like to travel on one's first train trip! The Railway Panorama and the Mareorama delivered a virtual journey on familiar modes of transportation; they were heavily themed earthbound experiences with enhancements of depth and motion. The Air-Balloon Panorama attempted to deliver an experience into territory traveled only by, at that time, a handful of people: straight up into the air and across the land, a Ferris-Wheel car without the axle leash.

Full 360-degree stationary painted panoramas had been displayed before, and wide-angle stationary scenes projected from slides had also been attempted enough times to solve most of the problems of hiding seams and overlaps. But for the Air-Balloon Panorama, the designers decided to use another exciting embryonic technology. The magic medium of film was used to create a panoramic movie to provide the illusion of rising to the clouds. French engineers, led by a Monsieur Grimoin-Sanson, built scaffolding for ten movie cameras, all driven by a system of gears powered by one hand crank. Each camera was positioned to cover a 36-degree field of view. The 1,000-pound panoramic movie camera was suspended from a real hot air balloon, which ascended over Paris to a height of 1,500 feet.

This experience was virtually recreated in a white-walled polygonal room 100 feet in diameter. At the center sat a large concrete structure housing ten projectors, and on this was the platform on which the spectators stood in an extra-large balloonist's wicker basket. From the ceiling hung the bottom portion of a balloon, complete with nets and rigging. The projection system was a feat of engineering. Electric arc lamps, producing intense light and heat, were vented by a system of ducts and fans. Each of the ten strips of film was glued into a 1,300-foot loop, providing nearly six minutes of projection. From their stationary platform, the participants saw a full-surround movie of the earth receding, and experienced the sensation of rising in the air. When the balloon reached its highest elevation, the film direction was reversed, and the participants "descended" safely to earth. Film. Flight. Paris from the air. Magic indeed!

IT'S NO FAIR

There have been many fairs across the planet since the Paris event. There were high points at Chicago, 1933; Brussels, 1958; New York, 1964; and Montreal, 1967. But the fairs and their

attractions quickly became less memorable, finally rolling off the collective U.S. memory with a whimper into the Mississippi at New Orleans in 1984. Today's mega-theme parks, regional amusement parks, county fairs, and high-tech arcades now own the territory of the blockbuster (usually licensed properties) thrill rides and the best, imagination-stretching illusions. As an entertaining educational technology showcase, fairs enabled their own demise. They featured, demonstrated, and made accessible technologies that established entire communications industries, ones that compressed space and time as a matter of course. The fairs helped acclimate Western culture to a free-market future of instant information but gradually ceased being the only place on Earth to learn where the culture is going.

TICKETS PLEASE

Much has happened since something as mundane as a passenger train changed the way people see their world. What hasn't changed? People. We will always seek entertainment. We still need constant social contact and exchange; we are drawn to wherever people congregate. Now we have many means of creating opportunities to congregate, to be amazed, to learn. The result has been an extraordinary diversity of modern illusionary entertainment experiences: online and out of home, homemade and professional. We now have some fine new steam engines, pulleys, cables, and rails; computers, interactivity, and the Internet have combined into our very own imagination-busting, wallet-lightening, and revenue-enhancing technosphere. Time and space spin on new first-forged axles. It's a fun bump and grind: to interact with new vistas of information, floods of never-seen names, and, sometimes, faces and places, becoming friends in growing communities, infant economies, and market opportunities. There are now a few million people here, ready to line up and hand over the plastic for a new World's Eye View of something. Where will this take us? Where do we take it? Where's the fair in all its promise? There are now much more cost-effective ways to disseminate experiences. Is there a "headhouse" of these technologies that will carry us in imagination, image, and interaction to a genuine equivalent of a world's fair? Tickets, please—especially when the other side of the transaction involves some escape or a way to experience familiar things in new ways. For the creative and entrepreneurial types among us, the future is no illusion.

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3.5.

Eames at the Fair: A Legacy of Communication Design

Celia Pearce

DESIGN + COMMUNICATIONS

The Office of Charles and Ray Eames has become an iconic symbol of mid-twentieth century modernism and California's role in that movement. Best known for its classic, museum-worthy furniture created for Herman Miller, the Eames case study house, innovative filmic essays, and collaborations with numerous seasoned and budding designers in Los Angeles during the 1940s through the 1970s, the Eameses are perhaps the most ubiquitous and well-known industrial designers of the 20th Century.

The Eames Office is also well-known for its visually compelling and unique style of innovative filmmaking, abstract designerly films that often sat somewhere between documentary and art, or as filmmaker and grandson to the Eameses called them, filmic essays.¹ These typically provided intimate studies of a class of artifacts, a cultural practice, or a process, often without the benefit of conventional cinematic techniques such as dialog, narration or even live actors. Their first Eames film, *Traveling Boy* (1950), comprised entirely of toys, set the stage for their future filmmaking endeavors. 1957 was a particularly productive year for the Eames film team, producing two of its best-known films, *Toccata for Toy Trains*, which draws viewers down to the scale of figures in a miniature world of train and train-related toys, and *Day of the Dead*, an exploration of the Mexican Día de los Muertos festival which takes place annually on All Soul's Day. In an ironic "life imitates art" twist, that same year, the Griffith Park miniature railroad in Los Angeles asked the Eames to design a one-fifth scale station and railyard through which a rideable miniature train would pass on its journey. Over time, the Eameses would be come known for their highly innovative experiments with immersive multimedia presentations, many of which were implemented for world's fairs.²

This chapter focuses their contribution to science, math and technology communications, principally through World's Fairs, as well as other related exhibitions and media. It also explores the Eameses personal fascination and prescient treatment of the nascent field of computing, and their innovative uses of exhibit design and media to introducing a mass public to the workings, benefits and potential of the technology. This paper will also focus on the trajectory of the Eames Office during its second two decades, which demonstrates

an increasing interest in developing sophisticated techniques for communicating scientific concepts to a lay audience through immersive blended experiences that combined media, built environments, and physical mechanical devices to introduce the general public to the principles of communication and computing. This work was also supported by a certain “scientific method”³ that included a high degree of R&D, hypothesis, experimentation, and modeling and simulation of ideas at various scales, using various materials and media.

THE FORAY INTO THE FAIR: IBM AND THE DAWN OF THE INFORMATION AGE

As early as 1953, the Eames Office began using its design-focused approach to film to explore the world of computers. The first of these, *A Communications Primer*, a self-instigated project propelled by personal interest, set the stage for a series of media presentations and exhibitions, including a number at world’s fairs, aimed at explaining communications theory and computing to a lay audience. A visual interpretation of Claude Shannon’s *The Mathematical Theory of Communication*,⁴ the film illustrated Shannon’s Input/Output diagram and signal processing theory. Presciently anticipating the advent of computer-aided-design tools fully a decade before they were invented, and propelled entirely by personal interest in the subject matter, the Eameses set out to make a film that presented communication theory to architects for use in planning and design. *A Communications Primer* was exemplary of the Eames “design laboratory” ethic, fusing art and science through domain research, R&D, prototyping and experimentation. The film combined live action, still photography, and animation, and was adopted by a number of communications professors, including Shannon himself. The film brought the Eames Office to the attention of IBM, who used it to introduce its staff to Shannon’s theories.⁶ IBM was hence to become an Eames client and patron, launching a thirty-year relationship resulting in dozens of projects, including films, multimedia, ephemera and books, as well as foundational world’s fair and other public exhibitions. Much of this work revolved around realizing Charles and Ray’s passion for communicating science to the general public in a fun and accessible way, a theme that would increasingly preoccupy them in the second half of their careers.⁷



Figure 1. A still image from the 1953 Eames film, *A Communications Primer*.

The first Eames project created for a World’s Fair was the film *The Information Machine: Creative Man and the Data Processor*, commissioned by Elliot Noyes, design director at IBM, in 1957. This was also the first film that the Eames Office made for a client, and one of many projects they did for the communications giant targeted at informing and evangelizing computing, as well as science and mathematics, to the general public. Created for the 1958 World’s Fair in Brussels, Belgium, the film can be seen in some respects as a sequel to *A Communications Primer*, extending many

of the concepts presented in the earlier film. *The Information Machine*, however, took a different stylistic approach, using hand-drawn animation to illustrate humans' increasingly complex need and ability to process information. Drawn in a friendly, even old-fashioned style, by Delores Cannata, the film was shot by Park Meek and John Whitney. In 1950, Whitney had invented the first analog computer stop-motion animation table by modifying a World War II Antiaircraft gun director. IBM also played a role in Whitney's trajectory as a pioneering computer animator by later awarding him its first post as artist-in-residence for the company.⁸

It's easy for the modern reader to take for granted the significance of a pair of educational films on communications and computing; however, when seen in light of their historical context, it's extraordinary that the Eameses—principally furniture and exhibition designers and filmmakers—would have the foresight to anticipate that this might be an important topic to capture. In 1953, computing was in its infancy. This was the year that IBM had introduced the 701 computer. Used primarily by the federal government, research laboratories and aircraft companies, the 701 rented for a \$12,000 a month (in 1950s dollars), and a total of 18 units were shipped.⁹ As IBM computing pioneer Howard Aiken put it in a 1952 in a quote often misattributed to Thomas J. Watson, "Originally one thought that if there were a half dozen large computers in this country, hidden away in research laboratories, this would take care of all requirements we had throughout the country."¹⁰ Taken in that light, it's remarkable that the Eameses would have been aware of and taken an interest in computers at this early a stage in their development, prior to coming into direct contact with IBM.

The period between *A Communications Primer* and *The Information Machine* set the stage for what was to follow. 1954 saw the introduction of the first silicon-based computer transistor by Texas instruments. The same year, IBM brought to market the 650, the first mass-produced computer, which sold an astonishing 450 units in its first year, over an order of magnitude increase in sales from the 701. Transistorized computers, replacing vacuum tubes, were introduced the following year by AT&T Bell Labs. In 1956, MIT Lincoln Labs created the TX-0; the following year, Digital Equipment Corp. was founded to commercialize the TX-0, which was eventually released in 1960 as the PDP-1, made famous for hosting the first computer game, *SpaceWar*.¹¹

The IBM collaboration for the World's Fair opened the door for other world's fair and exhibition projects. In 1958, the Eames Office was commissioned to create a film for the 1959 U.S.S.R.-U.S.A. cultural exchange in Moscow's Sokolniki Park. The event would become famous for the Kitchen Debate, in which Russian leader Nikita Khrushchev and then Vice President Richard Nixon debated the values of their respective political and economic systems against the backdrop of a modern kitchen filled with high-tech appliances. This was an exhibition designed by George Nelson to highlight American products and culture, the first cultural exchange between the two countries since the Russian Revolution. Nelson and the United States Information Agency, which sponsored the

project, asked the Eameses to produce an introductory film on “a day in the life of the United States.” By “flying under the radar,” as well as finishing the piece at the last minute, the office avoided creating a patriotic propaganda film touting American military might, and instead took a more effective humanistic, and personal approach aimed at building a bridge between the two cultures, another hallmark of their filmmaking and exhibition style.¹² *Glimpses of the U.S.A.* was one of the first multiscreen film presentations ever created, comprising over 2,200 still and moving images of American life. The images were projected onto seven twenty-by-thirty foot screens, roughly the shape of televisions of the period. These were suspended in an offset grid such that they appeared to float against the backdrop of a giant geodesic dome designed by Buckminster Fuller. The space was spectacular and futuristic, midway between a science fiction film and the Wizard of Oz. While not a World’s Fair in the traditional sense, the exhibition had the function of a mini world’s fair pavilion (including the budget), designed to promote a particular country or industry in an international context. Given the fact that the audience must largely have spoken only Russian, the choice of the Eameses, known for their expertise at compelling conveying culture through images, would have been an understandable choice for the project. The piece was an intimate and personal visual portrait of American life which aimed to emphasize commonalities rather than differences, and Ray Eames herself referred to it as an “affective” experience.¹³ Over three million Russians passed through the exhibit, ranking it their fifth favorite exhibit, after, among other things, cars, color television, and Disney’s Circarama.¹⁴

This was not the first project the Eameses had done for the U.S. government. In fact, one of the earliest projects taken on by the fledgling design company was a contract for leg splints from the U.S. Navy during World War II.¹⁵ Charles and Ray applied their previous research experiments with molded plywood to create 150,000 form-fitting leg splints for the Navy by the end of World War II.¹⁶ This contract enabled them to move into 901 Washington Blvd., which became their headquarters for the next forty-five years. As with *Glimpses of the U.S.A.*, the Eameses leveraged this contract to develop new techniques and technologies that could be applied to their own internal and future client-based projects.

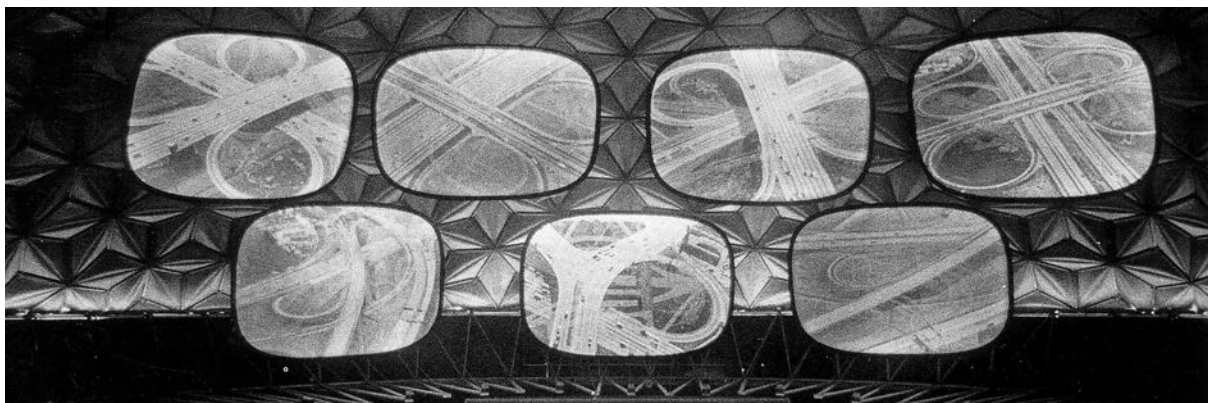


Figure 2. *Glimpses of the U.S.A.*, a multiscreen presentation created by the Eames Office for the 1959 U.S.S.R.-U.S.A. cultural exchange in Moscow, against the backdrop of a Buckminster Fuller Geodesic Dome.

SCIENCE FOR THE MASSES

Between 1960 and 1964, the Eames Office also produced a series of exhibitions, films and multimedia productions dealing with mathematics and scientific concepts, continuing to build its interest and expertise in innovative methods of communication design. In 1960, they continued their collaboration with IBM by producing *Introduction to Feedback*, the first in a series of proposed films designed to explain computing concepts to a lay audience. The film used everyday situations which would be familiar to mainstream audiences, such as threading a needle, or a little girl playing jacks, combined with animations, diagrams and other still images, to illustrate the computing principle of feedback, “[...] the cycle by which performance is measured, evaluated against desired results, and corrected for future performance.”¹⁷ The ten-minute film won several awards at film festivals in Europe, Canada and Australia.

The museum exhibit for which the Eames Office is best known, *Mathematica*, was produced the following year at the California Museum of Science and Industry, which stood on the site of the former State Exposition Building, a sort of permanent World’s Fair pavilion promoting California’s culture and industries. The museum had approached IBM about the exhibit, and they in turn asked the Eameses to submit a proposal.¹⁸ *Mathematica* was perhaps the most ambitious and influential science exhibition of its time. This exhibit further explored the Eameses special brand of “information overload,” incorporating sophisticated graphical communication techniques, including media, kinetic and hands-on interactive exhibits, and the densely populated History Wall, the first visual timeline.¹⁹ The History Wall is an interesting example of an analog attempt to create a kind of hypertext experience, drawing connections between events. While it is often critiqued for its information overload, it allowed viewers to quickly scan information in context and delve deeper into events based on their interests.²⁰

As with other architectural and installation projects, the Eameses and their staff built an elaborate scale model, and from it captured a series of color photographs taken at ground level to give the viewer a sense of immersion into the exhibit, not unlike the technique used for *Toccata for Toy Trains*. Charles was famous for his personal collection of pachinko machines, some of which were kept at the office, and one of the interactive pieces was a pachinko machine that dropped marbles to form a bell curve to demonstrate the laws of probability. Other components included a mechanical Möbius band circumnavigated on a rail by a giant arrow, and an interactive multiplication cube composed of spherical lights that would turn on and off to display user-initiated calculations. Also created for the exhibition were a series of “peep-show” films, using a Victorian-style single-viewer display.²¹ All or portions of *Mathematica* were later replicated at the Museum of Science and Industry in Chicago, the New York World’s Fair in 1964-1965, and the Time & Life Building in New York, as well as a number of other museums. Versions of it are still on display at the Museum of Science, Boston, and the New York Hall of Science, which sits on the site of the original New York World’s Fair, which will be discussed in the next section.

Throughout the sixties, The Eames Office continued to hone its facility for science and technology communication. For the 1962 Century 21 World's Fair in Seattle, they were asked by the U.S. Department of State to create an introductory film for the government's five pavilions, each of which was devoted to a different aspect of science. The impetus for this fair had been the poor showing of the U.S. at the Brussels Fair as compared to its chief Cold War rival, Russia,²² as well as the rise of the Soviet space program, and U.S. scientific progress was to be a centerpiece of the U.S. Pavilion. With landscaping done by the Disney Corporation, the fair left a number of legacies to Seattle's skyline, including its historic Space Needle.²³

The House of Science was a six-screen film presentation intended to convey the "excitement, diversity, and the richness of the scientific discipline."²⁴ Like many other Eames films about science and technology, *The House of Science* used a metaphor—in this case architecture—to illustrate the evolution of scientific disciplines, representing them through hand-drawn animation as buildings that divided into various subdisciplines as the sciences had become increasingly specialized. While the U.S.A. pavilion for the Russian cultural exchange used a montage of images on multiple screens, *The House of Science* introduced the technique of creating a contiguous image across multiple screens. The film also included still and live-action footage of contemporary scientific exploration in various settings.²⁵ The history portion of the presentation was written by renowned science historian and philosopher Thomas Kuhn, who published *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*²⁶ the same year the House of Science debuted.



Figure 3. *The House of Science* (1962), a multiscreen presentation created for the U.S. Pavilion at the Century 21 Worlds Fair in Seattle.

For the Seattle World's Fair, the Eameses also did a small side project for one of its other ongoing clients, Herman Miller, the principle manufacturer of the firm's furniture designs. During the installation of the Department of State Pavilion, Charles and his staff took numerous photographs of the installation of the Herman Miller Pavilion at the fair, which were later used as the basis for a film entitled *Before the Fair*. While the Eameses had previously made films about their furniture for Herman Miller to train their sales teams, *Before the Fair* was intended for publicity and advertising. The film thus built on the fair's role in promoting Herman Miller's furniture by creating a document of the event.²⁷

THE THINKING MACHINE

Many of the themes and trends of the Eames Office's previous work in science and technology communication, including World's Fair and museum exhibitions, as well as film and media, converged in its design of the IBM Pavilion at the 1964–1965 New York World's Fair. The fair itself is iconic in many senses, as indicated by the many publications, including several papers in this volume²⁸, devoted to it. Iconic images, such as the Unisphere and the rocket ship, which still stand on the site, remain universal symbols of fairs in general, and the 1964 fair in particular. It was the dawn of the Space Age, as well as the information age, and in true World's Fair tradition, the future was front and center. At the same time, this fair is often critiqued as a turning point in which world's fairs began to become increasingly commercialized.²⁹ Although historically the fairs had always embraced a certain amount of industrial boosterism, the corporate "brand" made one of its strongest showings here. Among the highly branded attractions were: Ford's "Magic Skyway," which included giant dinosaur automata, and General Electric's "Carousel of Progress," both designed, along with a number of other attractions, by the Disney Corporation; the Bell Systems Pavilion; the Uniroyal Tire Ferris Wheel, designed to look like a giant tire; and the IBM Pavilion, which architectural critic Vincent Scully described as "a huge eagle's egg, heavily laid on a thicket."³⁰ Located at the edge of the "Pool of Industry" in Flushing Meadows, the site of the 1939 World's Fair, the Pavilion was an immense undertaking that included large moving architectural elements, capped by a giant ovoid Theater designed to resemble the typing element on the recently released IBM Selectric Typewriter, a reference which served to confuse visitors, who were not yet familiar with the new technology.³¹

The Eames Office had begun collaborating on the project in 1961 with architect Eero Saarinen, who passed away that year. The project then passed to Roche/Dinkeloo Associates, who did the architecture and planning for the site, while the Eames Office was responsible for exhibition and media design and production. Both Eames and Saarinen wanted the building to look "unarchitectural"—Eames is somewhat well known for having abruptly aborted his formal architectural education—and to emphasize information.³²

For the IBM World's Fair Pavilion, film was an integral part not only of the final product, but also of the design process itself. Throughout its tenure, the Eames Office made a number of films that would today be described as "previsualizations."³³ Contemporary exhibition and architectural firms typically use computer graphics tools to create walkthroughs of design concepts for presentation and discussion purposes. With no such tools yet available, the Eameses merged their film experience with traditional architectural skills in physical model building, architectural plans and rendering, illustration, and photography. Between 1962 and 1964, they created two short films to convey and iterate their exhibition concepts to IBM and the project architects.

The final built environment looked at once both naturalistic and high-tech: A large ovoid-shaped theater, dubbed "The Information Machine," was held aloft by a treelike structure

above the main pavilion canopy. The building also had a number of moving elements, including a host podium that descended from the ceiling, and bleacher-style seats that ascended into the theater with over 400 visitors aboard.

The main theme of the exhibits and media was to demonstrate the role of the computer in everyday life. Bear in mind that this was in the mid-1960s. Computers were not as ubiquitous as they are today. Kennedy had been assassinated the previous year, but the emphasis on science and technology initiated by the Eisenhower administration and brought to the fore by Kennedy persisted under the Johnson administration. The space program was now in full swing, although the U.S. had not yet landed a man on the moon. In the intervening years between *The Information Machine* and the 1964 World's Fair, the computer industry had grown in leaps and bounds with the introduction of the printed circuit board, and computers beginning to take a role in manufacturing, design, and other fields. By 1964, IBM had the largest market share of what could now be fully considered an "industry." Sales of its new System/360 series, still high-cost mainframe computers, were up to 1000 units a month.³⁴



Figure 4. The IBM Pavilion at the New York Worlds Fair, designed by Eero Saarinen with Charles Eames. Top image shows the infamous ovoid theater, echoing the typing element IBM Selectric typewriter.

As the market leader in computing at the time of the New York World's Fair, IBM was in a unique position to take a leadership role in public education on the benefits of computing, an endeavor obviously to its advantage, since the utility of computers was still largely invisible to the common person. The exhibition, film and multimedia program created by the Eames Office for the New York World's Fair pavilion was perhaps the most ambitious effort to-date to evangelize the growing industry. The fact that the Eameses had a personal passion for the topic resulted in a highly innovative and compelling exhibition targeted to a general fair audience that totaled 70 million visitors between 1964 and 1965.³⁵

One of the hallmarks of the Eames approach to public communications was the use of familiar tropes, conventions and metaphors, as well as a love of nineteenth-century toys and gadgets and their potential for exploring science and math concepts. Charles in particular was influenced by nineteenth-century parlor tricks revolving

around scientific phenomena, which also had an air of magic about them. In spite of its high-tech and modern theme, the exhibit's content was wrapped in the playfully accessible mantle of a carnival filled with mechanical toys, reminiscent of some of their toy-based films such as *Traveling Boy*, *Tops* and *Toccata for Toy Trains*. Many of the exhibits used traditional media to convey computing concepts, putting them in a familiar context. The Eameses believed strongly that existing conventions could be used to create a bridge for both the artisan and the viewer, and that, when trying to innovate, it is more fruitful to push against their constraints than by working without them.³⁷ Regardless of their mantle of modernity, they were not afraid to turn to and modernize existing and even old-fashioned forms, which also became an accessible means for introducing new content and concepts. No more is this philosophy better exemplified than with the pavilion's computer-driven puppet shows. The friendly, familiar and playful form made modern by computer augmentation, once again, used the Eames technique of allegory and metaphor to explain computing systems and processes. *The Singular Case of the Plural Green Mustache*, used the deductive reasoning of Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson characters solving a mystery to illustrate the process of Boolean logic. *Computer Day at Midvale*, features the mayor of a fictional town appearing with a computer expert to inaugurate the town's first computer. The humorous scenario has the computer expert constantly correcting the city official as he conveys a series of common misconceptions about computers. The event is accompanied by music composed by Elmer Bernstein (who scored many Eames media and exhibition projects) played by the fictional "Charles W. Babbage Junior High School Marching Band," after the Victorian computer pioneer³⁸. (The Eameses would later make two films about the Babbage Difference Engine for the IBM corporate museum.³⁹) The displays also included variety of carnival-style hands-on and mechanical exhibits, including some elements from the *Mathematica* exhibit, including the "Scholar's Walk" history timeline and a fourteen-foot tall "Probability Machine."

The centerpiece of the IBM Pavilion was a multiscreen film presentation entitled *Think*. The immersive presentation used a multi-faceted array of twenty-two screens in different shapes, sizes, and orientations that wrapped around the convex interior of the ovoid "Thinking Machine." An evolution of prior multimedia presentations, it included both montage and continuous-image techniques, combining animated, still and live-action images with music, audio and a live host. Continuing the Eames' technique of utilizing familiar experiences and allegories, the presentation was designed to demystify the process of computing by demonstrating problem-solving at different scales, from familiar everyday problems, such as check-writing, a humorous scenario involving planning the seating for a dinner party, and coaching a football play, to complex technical, business or scientific ones, such as city planning and weather prediction. Whether it effectively succeeded in its communication goals is controversial;⁴⁰ however, the influence of this form of large-scale multimedia communication is not. It is clear that, for better or worse, the Eames had introduced a new set of traditions and conventions that was taken up by generations to follow, including large, mutli-screen presentations, the blending of different media, the quick montage and the emphasis on visual as opposed to verbal communication.



Figure 5. Multiscreen installation for the IBM Pavilion at the New York World's Fair 1964-65.

In addition to the “previsualization films,” the Eames Office also made a number of archival films to capture or translate the elements of the exhibition into sustainable form. This included filming the two puppet shows, and creating a condensed, single-screen version of the *Think* presentation, which were later made available for general distribution. They also produced a souvenir film, *IBM at the Fair*, a fast-moving review of the entire media and exhibition experience. When the fair was dismantled in 1965, a number of the exhibitions were moved and/or replicated in other venues, including the *Mathematica* exhibits in Chicago and Los Angeles, and the Time & Life Building in New York.

The last World's Fair project the Eames office produced was the film *A Computer Glossary Or, Coming to Terms with the Data Processing Machine*, a short film made for the HemisFair World's Fair in San Antonio, Texas in 1968. The film opened with a live-action sequence illustrating the path that data travels on a computer, accompanied by the voices of computer experts using professional jargon. The film then used animated sequences to illustrate various definitions in the filmic glossary.

AFTER THE FAIRS

The HemisFair exhibition of 1968 would be the last World's Fair project created by the Eames Office. However, if one were to create an Eames-style timeline of the firm's trajectory, what one would notice was that, following the fair projects, the last decade of the Eames oeuvre was increasingly occupied with media, communications and exhibits. Devising creative,

playful and interesting means to communicate concepts of science and technology, as well as history, to a mass audience of science and technology concepts, became one of the Eames Office's major preoccupations.

Some examples of this work, outside of the ongoing relationship with IBM, include a proposal film for the never-completed National Aquarium (1966-1969), an exhibition for the Smithsonian Institution, *Photography & the City: The Evolution of an Art and a Science* (1968), a proposal film for Boeing, promotional films for Polaroid, and a film for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, made in 1972, about the future of Cable Television.⁴¹ During this period, the office also produced the *Franklin and Jefferson* exhibition to celebrate the U.S. Bicentennial (1975-1977),⁴² and *Powers of Ten* (1971), perhaps the Eameses best-known film.

After the fairs, the IBM relationship continued to flourish through multiple media and projects, many of which built on the work and techniques developed for the New York World's Fair. The office made two films on the Babbage Difference Engine, *The Scheutz Machine* (1967), about a 1853 instantiation of the device made from Babbage's original plans, and *Babbage's Calculating Machine or Difference Engine* (1968), which used the classic Eames technique of a live-action close up study of an artifact or process. The Eames Office also produced numerous exhibitions on science, mathematics and technology themes for IBM. The most ambitious of these was *A Computer Perspective* (1971), which built on the themes of the New York World's Fair exhibition, as well as techniques used in the *Mathematica*. The exhibit included a 3D history wall that integrated artifacts, and the office also produced two films (1971, 1972) and a book (1973) to accompany and document the exhibition.⁴³ *A Computer Perspective* also included one of the first interactive computer applications to be seen in a museum exhibition. In addition, the office created a series of traveling exhibits for IBM's corporate museum on such themes as Fibonacci numbers, pioneers of astronomy (including Newton and Copernicus) and the science and mathematics of calendars, as well as accompanying films and ephemera, such as Newton card set, and a computer themed version of their famous House of Cards, created for the IBM Pavilion at Expo 70 in Osaka, Japan.⁴⁴

Perhaps the most compelling of the Eames-IBM post-fair collaborations, however, were two relatively small and often overlooked projects that prefigure the advent of interactive media. *Art Game* and *Merlin and the Time Mobile* were two films created for IBM in 1978 to explore techniques for creating interactive photo and video games and applications for the nascent laserdisc technology. In *Art Game*, players studied various painters and art movements, and then used their visual skills to identify works from selected artists. *Merlin* was a time travel game in which players engaged in nonlinear adventures in various historical periods. Although planned for implementation with the new technology, the project was cut short by Charles' untimely death in 1978 at the age of 71.⁴⁵

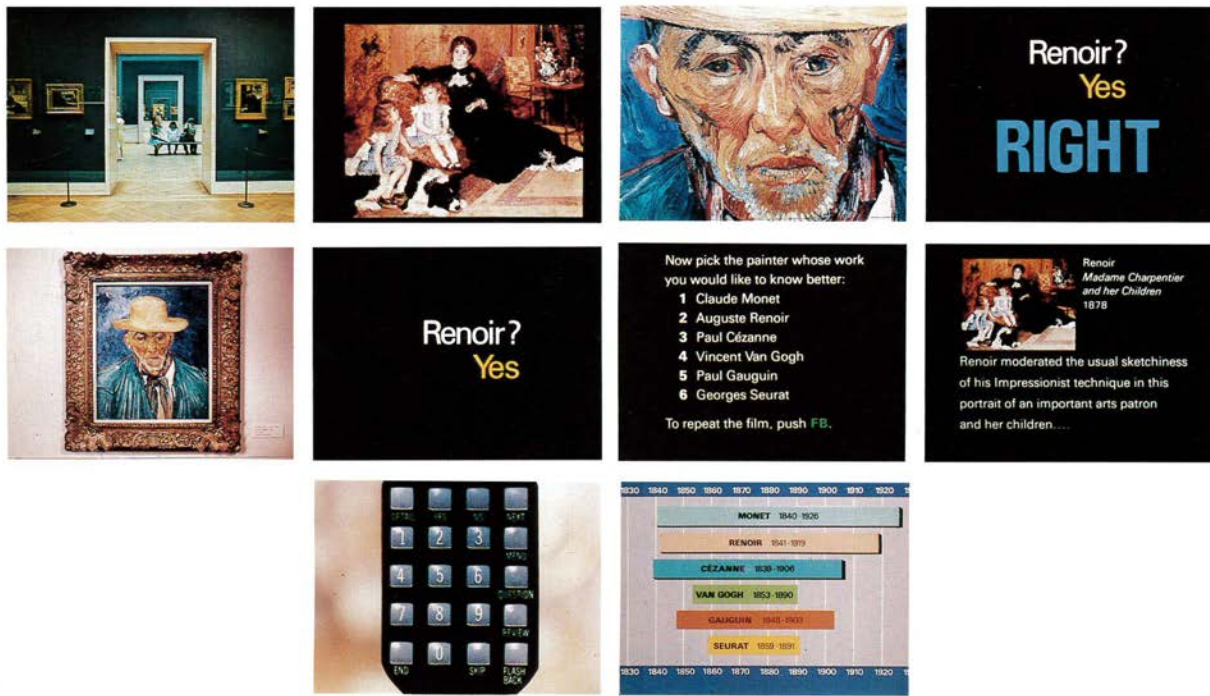


Figure 6. Proof of concept film Art Game (1978) created to explore the potential of the emerging laser disc technology.

After spending over two decades creating highly innovative media about computing, as well as a number of computer-aided gadgets, it's compelling to try to imagine what the Eames Office would have done with the medium of computing as it entered into the mainstream. Many of the exhibitions and media presentations produced by the Eames Office over the prior two and half decades could easily lend themselves to interactive explorations. And in fact the film Powers of Ten was later adapted into an interactive application. Considering their inventiveness with media in general, their love of play and technology, and their deft design skills, one can easily imagine that given another decade or two, the Eameses might have also been pioneers of next generation of "multimedia."

¹Eames Demetrios, *An Eames Primer*. (New York: Universe Publishing, 2001), 143-146.

²John Neuhart, Marilyn Neuhart, and Ray Eames, *Eames Design: The Work of the Office of Charles and Ray Eames*. (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1989), 28-35. 210-225; Pat Kirkham, *Charles and Ray Eames: Designers of the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1995), 317-328.

³Ralph Caplan, *Connections: The Work of Charles and Ray Eames*. (Los Angeles: UCLA Art Council, 1976), 40.

⁴Claude E. Shannon and Warren Weaver, *The Mathematical Theory of Communication*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1949).

⁵Demetrios, *An Eames Primer*, 146; Kirkham, 295.

⁶Neuhart et al, *Eames Design*, 183.

⁷Philip and Phylis Morrison, "A Happy Octopus: Charles and Ray Learn Science and Teach it with Images," in *The Work of Charles and Ray Eames: A Legacy of Invention*. (New York: Harry Abrams, 1997); Kirkham, Charles and Ray Eames 263.

⁸Gene Youngblood, *Expanded Cinema* (New York: E.P. Dutton & Company, 1970).

⁹IBM Online Archive: http://www-03.ibm.com/ibm/history/exhibits/701/701_customers.html (Accessed July 25, 2012).

¹⁰Bernard I. Cohen, *Howard Aiken: Portrait of a Computer Pioneer*. (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1999), 292.

¹¹Computer Museum Web Site History Timeline: <http://www.computerhistory.org/timeline/> (Accessed July 25, 2012.)

¹²Demetrios, *An Eames Primer*, 235; Kirkham, *Charles and Ray Eames*, 263-307.

¹³Kirkham, *Charles and Ray Eames*, 323.

¹⁴Hélène Lipstadt, "Natural Overlap: Charles and Ray Eames and the Federal Government," in *The Work of Charles and Ray Eames: A Legacy of Invention*. (New York: Harry Abrams, 1997), 160-166.

¹⁵Lipstadt, "Natural Overlap," 154.

¹⁶Neuhart et al, *Eames Design*, 28-35

¹⁷Neuhart et al, *Eames Design*, 251.

¹⁸Neuhart et al, 255-260.

¹⁹Kirkham, *Charles and Ray Eames*, 266.

²⁰Caplan, *Connections*, 43-44.

²¹Neuhart et al, *Eames Design*, 255-261.

²²Robert W. Rydell. *World of Fairs: The Century of Progress Expositions*. (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press), 222.

²³Rydell et al, *Fair America*, 100-105.

²⁴Neuhart et al, *Eames Design*, 271.

²⁵Neuhart et al, *Eames Design*, 271-273.

²⁶Thomas Khun, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1962).

²⁷Neuhart et al, *Eames Design*, 276.

²⁸In this volume: Preface, Introduction, Gaskins (141-157), Sabat (271-277), Telotte (395-407), Thomas (409-419), Warner (433-440), Walters (453-458).

²⁹Rydell et al, *Fair America*, 107.

³⁰Vincent J. Scully, Jr. "If This is Good Architecture, God Help Us," *Life* 57, No. 9 (31 July 1964), 9.

³¹Scully, "If This is Good Architecture, God Help Us."

³²Neuhart et al, *Eames Design*, 285.

³³Neuhart et al, *Eames Design*.

³⁴IBM Online Archive.

³⁵Bill Cotter and Bill Young: *The 1964-1965 New York World's Fair: Creation and Legacy* (Images of America). Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2013.

³⁶Kirkham, Charles and Ray Eames, 264.

³⁷Caplan, *Connections*, 32.

³⁸Neuhart et al, *Eames Design*, 302-303.

³⁹Neuhart et al, *Eames Design*, 326.

⁴⁰Caplan, *Connections*, 45-48.

⁴¹Neuhart et al, *Eames Design*, 380.

⁴²Neuhart et al, *Eames Design*, 416-525.

⁴³Neuhart et al, *Eames Design*, 366-370, 374, 392-393.

⁴⁴Neuhart et al, *Eames Design*.

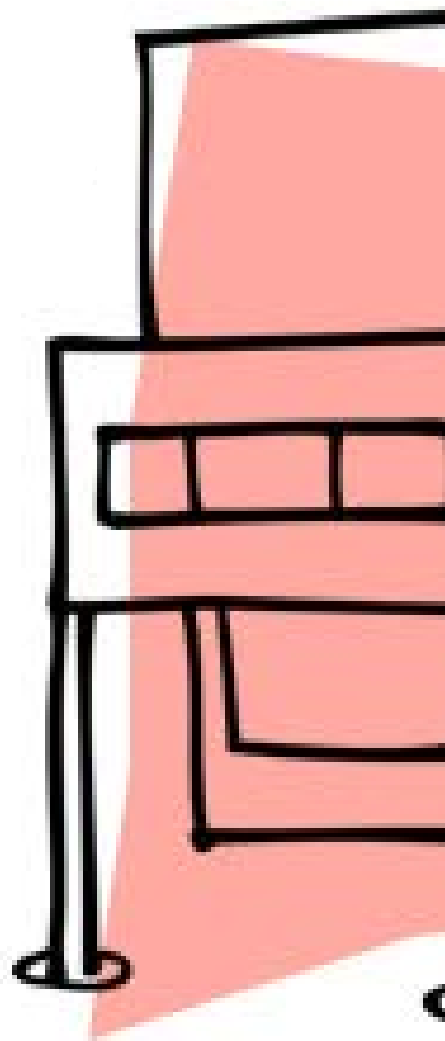
⁴⁵Demetrios, *An Eames Primer*. 256-257.

IMAGE CREDITS

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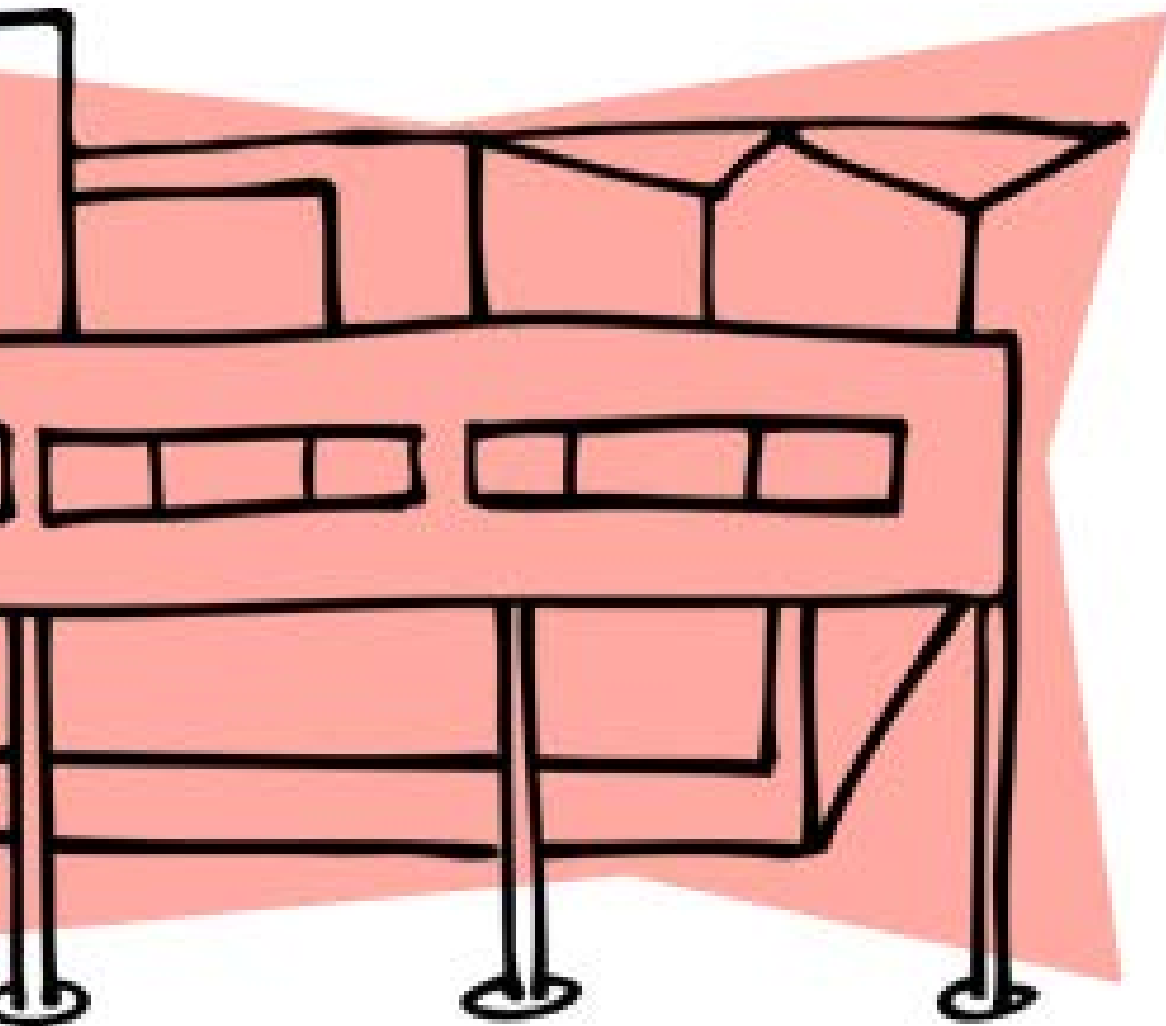
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DESIGN & ARCHITECTURE PAVILION

SECTION 4



4.1.

Socialism on Display: The Czechoslovak and Yugoslav Pavilions at the 1958 Brussels World's Fair

Kimberly Elman Zarecor | Vladimir Kulić

The 1958 Universal and International Exposition in Brussels—or EXPO '58, as it became commonly known—was the first “world’s fair” in almost twenty years. It was envisioned as a showcase of cooperation between nations and a record of humanity’s social progress and technological innovation in the years since the immense destruction of World War II. Yet despite great optimism, EXPO '58’s lofty goals were diminished by politics. In a scene similar to 1937, when the pavilions of the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany faced off across the concourse at the Trocadéro in Paris, the large pavilions of the United States and the Soviet Union dominated the central plaza on the fairgrounds in Brussels, reflecting a new global Cold War paradigm. In contrast to 1937, however, the Soviet Union was no longer the sole socialist state, but the leader of an international bloc that physically and ideologically confronted the trans-Atlantic alliance of Western liberal democracies at the fair. In addition, a third major grouping was in the making: the recently decolonized and rapidly modernizing Third World, gathering around the Non-Aligned Movement.

In the shadow of these divisions, two small socialist states, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia, emerged as the unexpected success stories of EXPO '58. Czechoslovakia won the *Grand Prix* for the best national pavilion and Yugoslavia built one of the most critically acclaimed pieces of architecture in the show. The stories of the two pavilions, and nations, with their striking similarities and paradoxical differences, show the many shades of gray that existed within the simplistic oppositions of communism and capitalism and East and West.

Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia shared historical commonalities: both were multinational and multiethnic states with majority Slavic populations, newly founded at the end of World War I from the remnants of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. But while Czechoslovakia thrived between the wars as an industrialized democratic state, Yugoslavia had a tumultuous period of inter-ethnic strife, royal dictatorship, and thwarted development. Their fates aligned again during and after World War II, when both countries were occupied and partitioned by the Axis forces and then, upon liberation, turned toward Moscow and communism, rather than to the West. Yugoslavia was the first to embrace the Soviet system in 1945 under the leadership of Josip Broz Tito, the leader of the communist partisans during the war.

In Czechoslovakia, the Communist Party, which had been legal since 1921, took power in February 1948 after the collapse of a weak coalition government. Architects in the two countries quickly reestablished the professional connections that had already been intense before the war.

Their situations diverged again in the summer of 1948, when, just months after Czechoslovakia's communist takeover, Soviet leader Joseph Stalin expelled Yugoslavia from Cominform, the international alliance of Communist Parties, because of ideological conflicts with Tito. This split forced the country to reform and liberalize its political and economic system and reestablish ties to the West, although Tito and his government remained deeply committed to communist principles and did not embrace democratic governance. In contrast, Czechoslovakia was at the beginning of its decades-long relationship with the Soviet Union in 1948. Under the leadership of long-time Party leader Klement Gottwald, the state began to implement Stalinist political, economic, and cultural policies, transforming Czechoslovakia into a compliant Soviet satellite by the early 1950s.

By the time of EXPO '58, these two countries had experienced the first decade of Communist Party rule in significantly different ways. Czechoslovakia was emerging from the hardships of Stalinism: notorious show trials; repression and censorship in the public sphere; forced Sovietization in cultural production; and failed economic policies. After Khrushchev's 1956 'Secret Speech,' denouncing the worst excesses of the Stalin years, Czech and Slovak politicians only slowly changed course. Unlike Hungary and Poland, which experienced mass unrest and political turmoil in 1956, Czechoslovakia remained stable, introducing small reforms to placate its citizens. In hindsight, the country's success at EXPO '58 proved to be a prelude to the more liberal and optimistic 1960s that culminated with the Prague Spring, widely regarded as the highpoint of its communist decades.

Yugoslavia, on the other hand, had largely escaped Stalinism and its repressive policies. The late 1950s were a period of spectacular economic growth for the country, coinciding with the development of a fast modernizing culture within a communist framework. Much of Yugoslavia's success was due to its ability to work with both communist and capitalist economies, giving it a hybrid character that would define it throughout the communist period. Relations with the Soviet Union also improved after Khrushchev visited Belgrade in 1955, but Yugoslavia never returned to the Soviet camp. Instead, by 1961, it became a leader of the Non-Aligned Movement, thus distancing itself from both political blocs.

In this context, visitors to the Brussels pavilions of Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia saw displays by two confident communist countries promoting their own unique visions of modernity and technological innovation as alternatives to Western capitalism and liberal democracy. They communicated their messages through an architectural language of glass-and-steel modernism, a palette that reemerged in the Soviet sphere in the wake of Khrushchev's campaign against historicist socialist realism. Yet these pavilions showed distinct expressions of socialist modernity. Czechoslovakia took a populist approach that

advertised the country as modern, prosperous, and technologically advanced because of socialism. The team of architects who designed its building had more than twenty years of specialized exhibition and retail design experience. They conceived of the pavilion as an immersive environment with colorful and fanciful displays, multimedia performances, and an upscale restaurant. Yugoslavia had a different approach, displaying a high-art pavilion by an avant-garde architect and artist, who was also experienced with exhibition design. Featuring dynamic interlocking volumes that contained gallery spaces filled with modern art, the Yugoslav pavilion in Brussels conjured a highly aestheticized image, whose avant-garde overtones directly referred to the resurrected avant-garde spirit of Yugoslav socialism.

THE ARCHITECTURE OF EXPO '58

Architectural purists do not remember EXPO '58 particularly fondly. Modernism may finally have triumphed, but this was a compromised and uncritical modernism diluted by extra-architectural motivations and purposes.¹ One of the surprises in Brussels was that so many of the pavilions, like the Czechoslovak and Yugoslav examples, were made of lightweight, prefabricated steel-frame and panel construction that suggested a universal and industrial modernist approach to which political ideology had little relevance. The gargantuan superpower pavilions, the Soviets' rectangular shed with an undulating roof and the perfectly round American pavilion, were indicative of the situation (Fig. 1). Although they offered opposing formal geometries and ideological messages—one selling the pleasures of the “American way of life,” the other the advantages of communism—the architecture was strangely similar, characterized by highly formal classicized monumentality, large open interior spaces, and axial symmetry. Even more distressing to many were signs that modernism had succumbed to popular taste as the influence of American corporate architecture was palpable.



Figure 1. Interior of Soviet Pavilion at EXPO '58, Brussels.

The Belgian section was especially reviled for its abundance of brightly-colored “space-age” ornament that became known as the Expo Style or the Atomic Style. The 335-foot-high Atomium—the exhibition’s chief landmark and one of the favorite attractions—captured the EXPO spirit and the era’s fascination with science and technology. But the shiny silver structure, built to represent an elementary iron crystal enlarged 165 billion times and endlessly reproduced in tourist merchandise, certainly was not on par with iconic nineteenth-century British and French exhibition constructions such as the Crystal Palace or the Eiffel Tower.

Although the public's response to the event was positive, only a handful of pavilions received favorable reviews in the press. Le Corbusier and Iannis Xenakis's Philips Pavilion was a swooping "electronic-spatial environment combin[ing] architecture, film, light and music into a total experience."² Sponsored by the international Philips Corporation, and notable for its corporate, rather than national affiliation, it was the best remembered and most experimental of the pavilions. Sverre Fehn's Pavilion of Norway was a masterpiece of the emerging Scandinavian regional modernism, made with wood, stone, plastic, and glass. Egon Eiermann and Sep Ruf's elegant West German Pavilion was composed of eight highly transparent glass cubes and lightweight steel frames and linked by open-air walkways. Understandably, the West Germans steered away from monumental classicism to avoid the still fresh memories of Nazi architecture.³

By challenging lingering stereotypes about the socialist countries' preferences for monumental and classical architecture, the modern style of the four socialist pavilions was intended to surprise observers. Socialist realism and well-known contemporary projects such as Stalinallee in East Berlin were still the international face of the Soviet Bloc at the time, but the showcasing of these modernist pavilions at a highly visible global event confirmed the arrival of a new era in architecture. Moscow was cognizant of the event's symbolic importance within Cold War ideological battles, even if its small alliance included only two satellites and a socialist country of questionable allegiance. As historian Lewis Siegelbaum discovered in the Moscow archives, the Soviets even met with officials in Prague and Budapest to discuss the three pavilions, which were located as a group on the fairgrounds.⁴ Like its counterparts, the Hungarian pavilion was modern in style and made out of lightweight panel and frame construction. Situated behind the Soviet and United States pavilions, its site was shallow and long facing the outer edge of the fairgrounds where its main entrance was hidden from most visitors. In contrast, Yugoslavia's pavilion was separated from the Soviet group.⁵ The hosts first offered the country a site next to the Spanish pavilion, rousing an immediate protest from the Yugoslavs, who refused any association with Francisco Franco's fascist regime. Instead, the pavilion ended up in a somewhat secluded section, behind a small grove of trees in the company of other European, but not socialist countries, a subtle political statement that reinforced Yugoslavia's maverick image and did not go unnoticed by the audience or journalists. According to the Belgian newspaper *Le Soir*, "Yugoslavia did in Brussels as it does in its international relations. Parting ways with the Soviet sector... it chose its place next to Portugal, Switzerland, and Great Britain. Next to its inoffensive friends."⁶

THE ARCHITECTS

The quality of design work in the Czechoslovak and Yugoslav pavilions reflected the expertise of the architects. In both cases, the designers were not apparatchiks or regime favorites as may have been expected, but rather exhibition and retail specialists whose careers started in the 1930s and who won state-sponsored competitions for the chance to design for Brussels. They were not, however, apolitical participants. They all had ties to the Communist Party and rare permission to travel to the West and the developing

world in the years just after 1948 when most citizens of their countries were barred from all international travel. The trips were especially valuable for them because of the opportunity to acquire rare, first-hand information on foreign architecture. As professionals, they publicly supported their countries' transition to socialism and proudly promoted its successes in their respective pavilions, although representations of the Communist Party itself, including the hammer and sickle insignia, were conspicuously absent from both displays.

In Czechoslovakia, architectural practice was reorganized after 1948 and private practice abolished. All architects had to work for a system of state-run design offices called Stavoprojekt or for state-owned enterprises as in-house designers.⁷ Stavoprojekt held an internal competition among its regional affiliates in 1956 to find a design team for the country's pavilion. Eight teams submitted proposals.⁸ The winning team was a group of exhibition specialists from the Prague office—František Cubr, Josef Hrubý, and Zdeněk Pokorný. All three had trained with leading avant-garde modernists at the Technical University in Prague between the wars. In the 1930s and 1940s, Hrubý worked with Josef Kittrich on retail design projects; their most famous building was the Bila Labut' (White Swan) Department Store in Prague from 1939. Cubr and Pokorný first teamed up as a pair in 1937 and designed the Kotva Export Store in Rotterdam two years later. They also did a number of exhibition commissions before and after 1948, including some interior spaces of the Czechoslovak Pavilion at the 1939 New York World's Fair, the Czechoslovak Exhibit in Stockholm in 1946, the Venice Biennale in 1947, and the Czechoslovak Industrial Exhibitions in Moscow in 1948, 1949, and 1951. From 1949-1954, Cubr and Pokorný individually designed displays for trade fairs and exhibitions around the world, traveling as trusted representatives to events in cities such as Beirut, Damascus, Jakarta, Paris, Stockholm, and Sofia. During the same years, Hrubý worked on building commissions at Stavoprojekt and designed a trade fair display in Utrecht, as well as the Czechoslovak Pavilion and Exhibition in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The three started working as a team in 1954 and immediately won Stavoprojekt competitions for department stores in Prague; they also collaborated on a high-profile exhibition design in Moscow to celebrate the first ten years of the "People's Democracy" in Czechoslovakia. With these professional backgrounds, the architects on the Czechoslovak team can best be described as retail and exhibition specialists with proven abilities to impress shoppers and exhibition visitors. These skills would prove critical in winning the *Grand Prix* award.⁹

Architecture in Yugoslavia was less institutionalized after 1948 and individuals could still run their own design firms for much of the communist period; nevertheless, many commissions came from the state. The winner of an open architectural competition in 1956 for the design of the Yugoslav pavilion was the Croatian architect Vjenceslav Richter, who had studied architecture at the University of Zagreb under professor Zdenko Strižić, an eminent modernist and former student of Hans Poelzig in Dresden.¹⁰ Politically active in leftist circles since his youth and influenced by Constructivism, the Bauhaus, and other progressive movements from the interwar period, Richter was committed to an avant-garde view of art and architecture as instruments of social and political change.¹¹ A co-

founder and chief ideologue of EXAT 51 (*Eksperimentalni atelier*—Experimental Studio), Yugoslavia’s first postwar independent artistic group, he argued for a synthesis of architecture and the visual arts in the creation of totally designed environments based on abstraction and continuous experimentation.¹² His winning proposal for Brussels was a striking Constructivist-inspired structure suspended from a gigantic central pillar, thus reducing the building’s footprint to a single point.¹³ Apart from the spectacular structural system, however, the proposal had elegant spatial and functional qualities, particularly the exhibition spaces that cascaded smoothly from level to level.

Richter was a perfect match for the project, both for his considerable professional experience in exhibition design and for his political devotion to the Yugoslav socialist project. He became active in leftist circles in Zagreb in the mid-1930s and joined the Association of Communist Youth of Yugoslavia in 1939. Because of his political views, he suffered during the war as he was forced out of university, then wounded in resistance fighting, and finally interned at a work camp in Vienna. With this political pedigree and the completion of his studies after the war, Richter acquired modest but important commissions for various small exhibition pavilions at fairs in Yugoslavia and abroad. As was the case with the three Czechoslovak architects, the fair commissions allowed Richter to travel to the West well before that was possible for ordinary Yugoslavs to do so; his earliest pavilions abroad included those in Stockholm and Vienna in 1949 and Hannover, Paris, and Chicago in 1950. (In Chicago, he made a point of visiting László Moholy-Nagy’s New Bauhaus, thus taking the opportunity to update his knowledge of the displaced European avant-garde.) From the very start, Richter’s designs demonstrated an allegiance to modernism, even at the time of the official pressure to impose socialist realism. By 1950, this allegiance acquired a much more specific tone that revealed references to constructivism, which Richter himself repeatedly emphasized as a major influence on his work. Besides exhibition pavilions, Richter designed only a handful of significant permanent buildings, but he also had a significant international career as sculptor and painter, carving out a unique professional niche for himself.

Both Richter and the Czechoslovak architects shared roots in interwar avant-garde modernism, but they also felt a kinship with the EXPO ‘58 organizers who, “bearing in mind the human suffering caused by the Second World War and its nuclear apotheosis... intended to promote the positive aspects of scientific achievements in the hope they would outshine the risks and dissipate anxiety.”¹⁴ The organizers chose the motto, “a review of the world for a more humane world” to express these intentions. The portrayal of technology as a force for good in the world resonated, in particular, with the committee putting together the program for the Czechoslovak Pavilion, which had its own motto, “we live in 1958, the year of technological miracles, when all is possible.”¹⁵ Its optimism is evident in the pavilion’s varied displays from ideas for new energy sources to children’s toys to exuberant art glass and scientific machines. The Yugoslavs focused more on the “humanist concept” proclaimed by the organizers, which resonated with the post-1948 shift in Yugoslavia’s own politics as they moved away from a bureaucratized Stalinist system and towards a decentralized form of governance that placed greater emphasis on the well-being of the individual.¹⁶

The global perspective of the event, stressing cooperation and tolerance between countries, also resonated with Yugoslavia's independent foreign policy that, by the time the exhibition opened, was already being formulated into the ideology of non-alignment.

THE PAVILION OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA

According to polls taken at the time, the Pavilion of Czechoslovakia was one of the most popular among visitors. Numerous awards including the *Grand Prix* and individual awards for attractions within it, such as the multimedia theater shows *Laterna Magika* and *Polyekran*, validated their individual impressions. These successes were well publicized to the Czechoslovak public through the mass media, although because of severe travel restrictions fewer than 6,000 Czechs and Slovaks were able to visit the Pavilion in situ, compared to the estimated 6,000,000 other people who came through its doors.¹⁷ As the *Grand Prix* winner, and a global advertisement for socialist Czechoslovakia, the building achieved a cult status at home in the years immediately following, particularly among architects and designers, most of whom knew the building only through photographs and second-hand accounts.



Figure 2. František Cubr, Josef Hrubý, and Zdeněk Pokorný, Pavilion of Czechoslovakia at EXPO '58, 1956-1958.

As exhibition specialists, the architects chose to design a skillful building that was more of a backdrop for the objects on display than an ambitious piece of design work on its own. The pavilion had two parts: a primary two-story exhibition pavilion with an L-shaped floor plan and a two-story restaurant tucked into the courtyard of the L plan. The main pavilion had a clear glass entry hall flanked on either side by opaque glass volumes made

of experimental prefabricated panels of foam glass (crushed glass mixed with limestone or carbon) and polycarbonate plastic mounted on a steel frame; a model Kaplan turbine tower stood out front (Fig. 2). In the recent exhibition catalogue, *Brussels Dream*, Czech architectural historian Martin Strakoš notes that there were competing formal agendas in the Pavilion, a classicizing impulse in the entrance facade and the relationship of the entrance hall to the exhibits and an industrial sensibility, relating to materials and construction.¹⁸ The Stavoprojekt branch in Gottwaldov (formerly Zlín) oversaw construction. It is noteworthy that this is the same Stavoprojekt branch that was continuing the research work of the famed Baťa Shoe Company, which had been researching industrial prefabrication technologies for buildings for decades. In fact, during the same time that the pavilion was being fabricated and prepared for shipment to Brussels, some of the first Czechoslovak concrete panel apartment buildings were being erected under the supervision of architects and engineers from the same office.¹⁹

The interior displays were organized around three themes—work, leisure, and culture—and a narrative structure called “One Day in Czechoslovakia” which was introduced to visitors in a brochure that they were given at the entrance by specially trained guides. Historian Cathleen Guistino writes that each section sought to depict “non-elite Czechoslovak citizens’ everyday routines.”²⁰ The displays included exhibits on energy, machinery, glass and ceramics, and agriculture in the work section; aesthetic taste, including clothing, shoes, and designed objects, children and puppetry, and free time in the leisure section; and literature, science, music, and art in the culture section. The final stop on the processional tour through the pavilion was the theater for the Polyekran and Laterna Magika performances. Visitors could then go into the courtyard and eat at one of the two restaurants in the smaller building. Highly respected theater designers, exhibition designers, artists, and architects were part of the team which created the displays that were universally praised for their creativity, materials, didactic value, and variety. Even the food at the restaurants was popular, although politicians from Prague complained that it was too expensive (Fig. 3).²¹



Figure 3. František Cubr, Josef Hrubý, and Zdeněk Pokorný, Pavilion of Czechoslovakia at EXPO '58, 1956-1958. Restaurant.

Some of greatest successes of the Czechoslovak Pavilion were its multimedia presentations, the Laterna Magika, the Polyekran, and Karel Zeman’s film, *Vynález zkázy* (translated literally as “A Deadly Invention,” released in the United States as *The Fabulous World of Jules Verne*) also shown in the theater, which won the prize for the best film at EXPO '58. The multimedia shows relied on a literal collaboration between humans and technology. The world-renowned Laterna Magika integrated projection screens and filmic images with

musicians and actors on the stage who responded to and interacted with the pictures on the screens. The Polyekran was a film and music presentation with an avant-garde spirit. Zeman's film combined live actors and animation in an innovative, and prescient way.²² In much the same way, the pavilion and its exhibits were a backdrop for the human events unfolding inside of it—a spatial marriage of humans and technology. Seen this way, the Pavilion itself was a form of theater that combined and showcased people, exhibits, and the technological construction of the spaces. The consistency of this concept throughout the Pavilion may explain why it was such a popular and critical success, especially given the mood at the Expo and the interest in technology as a positive force.

THE PAVILION OF YUGOSLAVIA

Richter's original design for Brussels, which proposed to suspend the whole building from an enormous central cable-stayed mast, inevitably evoked Constructivism and its penchant for suspended structures, most famously exemplified in Ivan Leonidov's project for the Lenin Library in Moscow (1927), or Hannes Meyer's *Petersschule* in Basel (1926). At the same time, it also had more populist connotations, resonating with such contemporaneous landmarks of international exhibitions as the "Skylon," a gigantic cable-stayed tower erected for the Festival of Britain in London in 1951. From the very start, however, the idea proved structurally problematic due to huge wind deflections. Despite Richter's protests, the pavilion was eventually built on twelve cruciform steel columns, albeit thin enough to retain the impression of an open ground floor. Instead of a central mast, Richter constructed a daring obelisk consisting of six tensile arches, which marked the position of the pavilion and symbolized Yugoslavia's six constituent republics.



Figure 4. Vjenceslav Richter, Pavilion of Yugoslavia at EXPO '58, Brussels, 1956-58.

Even without the mast, the pavilion was a masterful realization of Richter's ideas about the synthesis of visual arts. The building's interlocking volumes appeared to float above a luxurious plaza interspersed with rectangular water pools, creating a dynamic cascade of split levels with no barriers between the exterior and interior (Fig. 4). Rather than a fair pavilion, the building resembled an elegant, sparsely furnished art gallery, in which every exhibit yielded to an aesthetic of black and white three-dimensional grids interspersed with occasional splashes of color. Indeed, Richter took full aesthetic control of all displays, creating a powerful total work of art in the service of state representation. It was, however, the building itself that conveyed the most powerful political message, its open, free-flowing space evoking a reformed, open, and modern Yugoslav socialism, liberated from Stalinist oppression.

An important quality of Richter's split-level layout was that it gave clear spatial articulation to the four parts of the exhibition, while maintaining easy circulation and visual connections between them. The main entry to the pavilion led across a plaza, past the souvenir booth, and then either half a floor down to a sunken Gallery of Economy, or half a floor up to the Gallery of State and Social Organization. From the latter, another half-level up, one accessed the Gallery of Art, perched above the entrance, and the Gallery of Tourism. This organization, with the economy firmly anchored to the ground, the rest floating above it, made the Marxist tropes of "social basis" and "superstructure" materially tangible.²³

The ground levels were lavishly decorated with sculptures, reliefs, and murals, artfully combined with water pools, colorful marble paving, and islands of greenery to create an atmosphere of restrained opulence and grace. In such settings, even the few exhibited pieces of industrial machinery looked like objects of art. The tone changed upon entry to the Gallery of State and Social Organization, politically the most important part of the exhibition. Reduced to two-dimensional graphics, the information lacked the visual appeal of the rest of the pavilion. Some of the key political messages, about the democratic nature of Yugoslav socialism and its broadly participatory character for example, were cast in decidedly poetic terms, circumventing overt ideological symbols and thus avoiding the impression of propaganda. The other three galleries—Economy, Art, and Tourism—supported this political narrative, but also served more pragmatic purposes. The Gallery of Economy advertised colored metals as one of the country's largest exports, showing mineral specimens in attractive display cases. The Gallery of Art advertised not only the flourishing of the national culture, but also the liberation from the constraints of Socialist Realism. Finally, the Gallery of Tourism, with its displays of natural beauties and traditional artifacts, supported the nascent tourist industry, which in the following decades would attract visitors from both the East and the West.



Figure 5. Vjenceslav Richter, Pavilion of Yugoslavia at EXPO '58, Brussels, 1956-58. Interior.

Richter's pavilion was first and foremost an architectural success. The prestigious British journal *Architectural Review* ranked it among the "six outstanding pavilions" at the whole exposition. For the French daily *L'Express*, it fared even better, among the top four.²⁴ Gurus of modernism, such as Alfred Barr, Jr. of the Museum of Modern Art in New York and Jean Cassou of the Paris Museum of Contemporary Art, praised the building, as well as the art show displayed inside. This positive reception, however, frequently revealed stereotypical views of Yugoslavia, manifested in a perpetual surprise that a socialist and Balkan country was able to produce such a modern and sophisticated structure (Fig. 5). As one of the hosts put it, "People were surprised that we build such modern and beautiful architecture. Many even asked if we were allowed to build in such a way in the country, too, and emphasized the difference between ours and Russian architecture."²⁵ Such a positive reception of the architecture was in itself a political message that further strengthened the existing Western views of Yugoslav modern art as a symptom of the country's break from the Soviet orbit.²⁶ It was not much of a leap to interpret particular qualities of the building in political terms, too. The building's openness, for instance, was seen as analogous to Yugoslavia's open borders and its emergent international policy of "peaceful active coexistence."²⁷

The pavilion's success with educated Western elites was counterbalanced by a much cooler popular reception. Many ordinary Yugoslavs who came to Brussels thought that it was "empty" and "too modern."²⁸ Some foreigners, too, observed that the elegant but cool building conveyed nothing of the country's "vibrancy."²⁹ Ultimately, however, it was the attendance that proved the most disappointing, as less than ten percent of EXPO's forty-five million visitors ventured towards the pavilion. Of course, its position was rather secluded and it could not compete directly with the enormous pavilions of the two superpowers, filled with all kinds of technological wonders. But Czechoslovakia demonstrated that, through sheer ingenuity and smart planning, a small country with no cutting-edge technology could create a spectacular exhibition capable of attracting huge crowds. Unlike Czechoslovakia's *Grand Prix*, Yugoslavia's Gold Medal—one of thirty-five—was awarded by the international jury solely on account of the elegant building and the art exhibition; as the jury noted, the pavilion's "didactic quality" was utterly disappointing.

It was under such circumstances that during the last month of the EXPO a collection of hand-made dolls in folk costumes, created by an amateur ethnographer, was displayed at the Gallery of Tourism. The dolls' intricate costumes and smiling faces finally attracted the desired attention: almost every major Belgian paper and both existing television channels covered them, at the same time boosting the numbers of visitors by at least ten percent. The dolls, however, directly undermined the key message of Richter's building, which cast the country as modernizing quickly and oriented towards an optimistic, experimental future, rather than a sentimental past.

LEGACIES

For many citizens of both Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia, the positive responses to their national pavilions were signs that their countries and political systems could compete with the rest of the world in the broadest sense. Conversely, such responses revealed that Cold War divisions could be softened, if not totally overcome, as millions of predominantly Western visitors happily strolled through the pavilions of the two socialist states, enjoying what they found inside. Long after Expo '58 both pavilions survived as artifacts, as well as the sources of cultural legacies, but in different ways and with different connotations.

The Czechoslovak Pavilion was brought back to Prague after Expo '58 and the main pavilion installed at the Prague Fairgrounds amongst other notable historic pavilions from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The restaurant was installed separately on a site in Letná Park overlooking the city center. In 1959, Cubr, Hrubý, and Pokorný built a permanent home, and controversial glass block building, to house the *Laterna Magika* in a prominent position in Prague next to the National Theater. In 1989, the *Laterna Magika* was the headquarters of Václav Havel's political operation, Civic Forum. Sadly, the main pavilion burned down in 1991, a decade before it was "rediscovered" by a recent generation of admirers, who like their earlier compatriots, had come to know the building primarily in photographs. This generation was behind the 2008 exhibition and catalogue, *Brussels Dream*, which commemorated the fiftieth anniversary of Expo '58. The restaurant operated

for many years, but was closed and then renovated recently as offices for a private company. Within the historiography, the Pavilion is often associated with a change in design culture in Czechoslovakia from socialist realism to something that might be called an international modern style with socialist flare – what came to be known as the “Brussels Style.” Architecturally the Pavilion was not something unexpected or anti-establishment; rather, its design exemplified the official culture in 1956, just as a socialist realist Pavilion would have done three years earlier.

The Pavilion of Yugoslavia also survived the show: it was sold to a Belgian contractor and reassembled as the St. Paulus College in the city of Wevelgem, Belgium, where it still stands in a somewhat altered shape. The lingering memory of its success continued coloring the foreign perceptions of Yugoslav architecture for a long time.³⁰ Yet the pavilion did not mark an architectural watershed for Yugoslavia, it only cemented the already established predominance of high modernism as the aesthetic formulation of socialist modernization in the country. The Brussels success, however, was arguably a turning point in Richter’s career. He was given virtually free reign in designing two other national pavilions, for Turin in 1961 and for Milan in 1963, both much smaller than the one at Expo ‘58 but aesthetically even more daring.³¹ More importantly, Brussels opened the door for Richter’s successful international career as an artist, which allowed his sculptures to find their way into prestigious international collections, such as that of the Museum of Modern Art in New York. Like his Czech colleagues, Richter was a firm believer in the socialist project, but he was also able to take advantage of the relative permissiveness of the Yugoslav system and carve a unique professional niche for himself, which allowed him to act with considerable independence, unattached to any official institutions. His very career thus embodied the declared ideals of Yugoslav socialism: devotion to perpetual experimentation, openness to international cooperation, relative cultural autonomy, and concerted efforts at modernization. His pavilion at Expo ‘58, however, also revealed the inherent contradictions in that image, perhaps best summarized in the contrast between the building and the exhibition of dolls in folk costumes—an apt metaphor for the multiple intersections at which Yugoslavia stood at the time: between modernity and tradition, between the ideological blocs of the Cold War, and between political and economic systems.

Considering that in political and cultural terms the USA and USSR were almost irresistible centers of gravity at the time of Expo ‘58, it is noteworthy that both Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia reconstituted and hybridized the models set by the super powers, both in terms of content (American popular display vs. explicit Soviet propaganda) and aesthetics (American appropriation of high-modernist aesthetics vs. the lingering classicism of the Soviet pavilion executed in a highly technologized form). Within this frame of reference, Czechoslovakia combined the American popular/populist approach to the displays with hybrid aesthetics reminiscent of the Soviet pavilion. Yugoslavia did the opposite: the content was largely political propaganda and high culture, but the form was uncompromisingly avant-garde/high modernist. The tensions between populism and high art, as well as

between progressive and conservative aesthetics, had been a staple of world's fairs all the way back to the Crystal Palace, regardless of the political specificities of the moment; it was precisely the resolution of these tensions that had always been at the heart of each national presentation. From such a perspective, both the Pavilion of Czechoslovakia and the Pavilion of Yugoslavia at Expo '58 emerge not as peripheral echoes of imperial centers, but as original achievements that provided new formulas for the key dilemmas of modernity. In this way, they both succeeded in transcending the limitations of geopolitics, even if they could not escape the long shadow of Cold War dominations and narratives.

¹For overview, see Rika Devos and Mil De Kooning, *L'Architecture moderne à l'Expo 58. 'Pour un monde plus humain,'* (Brussels: Fonds Mercator and Dexia Banque, 2006).

²Marc Treib, *Space Calculated in Seconds: The Philips Pavilion, Le Corbusier, Edgard Varèse* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1996), 3.

³Greg Castillo, "Making a Spectacle of Restraint: The Deutschland Pavilion at the 1958 Brussels Exposition," *Journal of Contemporary History* 46:1 (January 2012): 97-119.

⁴Lewis Seigelbaum, "Sputnik Goes to Brussels: The Exhibition of a Soviet Technological Wonder," *Journal of Contemporary History* 46: 1 (January 2012): 120-136.

⁵György Péteri, "Transsystemic Fantasies: Counterrevolutionary Hungary at Brussels Expo '58," *Journal of Contemporary History* 46: 1 (January 2012): 137-160.

⁶Quote from *Le Soir* of May 14, 1958, reported in TANJUG press-clipping, June 28, 1958; Archive of Yugoslavia, Belgrade, (AY), Fond 56, Fascikla 6.

⁷See Kimberly Elman Zarecor, *Manufacturing a Socialist Modernity: Housing in Czechoslovakia, 1945-1960* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2011).

⁸Daniela Kramerová and Vanda Skálová, eds., *Bruselský sen: Československá účast na světové výstavě Expo 58 v Bruselu a životní styl 1. poloviny 60. let* (Prague: Arbor Vitae, 2008), 92.

⁹See Otakar Nový and Jiří Setlík, eds., *Cubr, Hrubý, Pokorný* (Prague: Nakladatelství Československých výtvarných umělců, 1962).

¹⁰Marijan Susovski, ed., *Zbirka Richter Collection* (Zagreb: Zagreb Museum of Contemporary Art, 2003).

¹¹*Ibid.*, 17.

¹²Ješa Denegri and Želimir Košević, *EXAT 51: 1951-1956* (Zagreb: Nova Gallery, 1979).

¹³Vladimir Kulić, "An Avant-Garde Architecture for an Avant-Garde Socialism: Yugoslavia at EXPO '58," *Journal of Contemporary History* 46:1 (January 2012): 160-183.

¹⁴Fredie Flore and Mil De Kooning, "The Representation of Modern Domesticity in the Belgian Section of the Brussels World's Fair of 1958," *Journal of Design History* 16:4 (2003): 319.

¹⁵Kramerová and Skálová, eds., *Bruselský sen*, 14.

¹⁶Anon., "Tekstovi za katalog Međunarodne izložbe u Brislu 1958. godine," n.p., AY, Fond 56, Fascikla 21.

¹⁷Kramerová and Skálová, eds., *Bruselský sen*, 84.

¹⁸*Ibid.*, 93.

¹⁹See Kimberly Elman Zarecor, "The Local History of an International Type: The Structural Panel Building in Czechoslovakia," *Home Cultures* 7:2 (Spring 2010): 217-236.

²⁰Cathleen Guistino, "Industrial Design and the Czechoslovak Pavilion at EXPO '58: Artistic Autonomy, Party Control and Cold War Common Ground," *Journal of Contemporary History* 46:1 (January 2012): 200.

²¹*Ibid.*, 209.

²²On the multimedia presentations, see Kramerová and Skálová, eds. *Bruselský sen*, 14-87, 156-163.

²³Anon., "Izveštaj o nekim problemima i iskustvima našeg istupanja na Izložbi u Brislu," n.p. AY, Fond 56, Fascikla 6.

²⁴"Six Outstanding Pavilions: Yugoslavia," *Architectural Review*, 124: 739 (August 1958): 116-18.

²⁵Report by the host Mirjana Brujić, AY, Fond 56, Fascikla 6.

²⁶On foreign views of Yugoslav architecture during the Cold War, see Vladimir Kulić, "'East? West? Or Both?': Foreign Perceptions of Architecture in Socialist Yugoslavia," *Journal of Architecture* 14:1 (2009): 87-105.

²⁷Richter himself doubted architecture's ability to capture the character of a nation, even though he eventually acknowledged that his pavilion expressed Yugoslavia's "optimism and openness." Vjenceslav Richter, "Osvrt na arhitektonske rezultate izložbe u Bruxellesu 1958," *Arhitektura* (Zagreb) 12 (1958): 56-62.

²⁸"Knjiga utisaka," n.p., AY, Fond 56, Fascikla 26.

²⁹*Ibid.*

³⁰For example, recalling the success at Expo '58, the *Architectural Review* noted, "If there is an architecture which stands in need of shrewd and deep interpretative study at present, it is that of Yugoslavia;" quoted in George E. Kidder Smith, *The New Architecture of Europe* (Cleveland and New York: The World Publishing Company, 1961), 332.

³¹See Vladimir Kulić, Maroje Mrduljaš, and Wolfgang Thaler, *Modernism In-Between: The Mediatory Architectures of Socialist Yugoslavia* (Berlin: Jovis, 2012), 43-44.

IMAGE CREDITS

1, 4-5. Printed with permission from the Archive of Yugoslavia, Belgrade.

2-3. Public domain image from *Arhitektura ČSR*.

4.2.

The 1925 Paris Exposition des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes and Le Pavillon de *L'Esprit Nouveau*: Le Corbusier's Manifesto for Modern Man

Lynn E. Palermo

With the 1925 Exposition des Arts décoratifs et industriels modernes in Paris (Paris Decorative Arts Exposition), the French intended to reclaim commercial and aesthetic leadership in the decorative arts, an industry which France had traditionally dominated.¹ According to the exposition organizers, development of an original style to signal a clear break with the pastiches of the nineteenth century would be crucial to this enterprise. When the project was first proposed in 1909, French art critic Roger Marx predicted that “an exhibition of this kind would bring an end to the scorn to which the machine has been subjected, and end the longstanding antagonism between architects and engineers [in France].”² A new aesthetic for the machine age would demonstrate a French decorative arts industry evolving in tandem with the modern technology of mass production. Indeed, the French were being outpaced by competing nations. The 1902 Exposition of Decorative and Modern Arts in Turin had insisted that all submissions show a renewed aesthetic with a marked departure from styles of the past.³ In Germany, the Deutscher Werkbund,⁴ was developing comprehensive approaches to the decorative arts, bringing together designers and industrialists to produce aesthetically pleasing, high quality, mass-producible furniture and accessories adapted to urban lifestyles and moderate income households.

Despite calls for revolutionary thinking, the Paris Decorative Arts Exposition ended up still valuing artisan production over industrialism in pavilions brimming with furniture and accessories that featured exquisite craftsmanship and expensive materials, including exotic wood imported from the French colonies. This style, named “art deco” for its exposition debut, clearly targeted the haute bourgeoisie, more than broadening the market.

The modernist Pavillon de *L'Esprit Nouveau* (Fig. 1), designed and built by the architect Le Corbusier, stood in stark contrast to the other pavilions on the fairgrounds. Built entirely of industrial materials (concrete, steel, and glass), Le Corbusier's pavilion exposed the Exposition's vision as complacent, even timid. His own vision extended far beyond questions of style to encompass everything from the design of chairs to the design of houses to the design of cities. Le Corbusier claimed that his work reflected universal modern values, from

which emerged a new aesthetic. Spurning the exposition organizers' invitation to design "an architect's home" with the elitism it implied, he famously preferred to present a house for the new, modern "everyman" or "cultivated man" emerging in the age of machines.⁵ Le Corbusier also termed this modern man *l'homme tout nu*, or "naked man" in his book *L'Art Décoratif d'aujourd'hui (Decorative Art Today)*, published to coincide with the exposition.⁶



Figure 1. Le Corbusier Pavilion de *L'Esprit Nouveau*, a home for the modern *homme tout nu*.

Le Corbusier's withering criticism of the ostentatious Decorative Arts Exposition and the values it implied originated in part in the housing crisis facing France in the wake of World War I. Most of the combat had taken place on French soil with the result that 11,000 public buildings and 350,000 houses were damaged or destroyed. In the ravaged north, where some villages were completely obliterated, restoration and reconstruction would not be declared complete until 1931.⁷ In Paris, wartime conditions had exacerbated already poor housing conditions. Many of the densely populated working class tenements had never been modernized, leading to a high risk of fire and disease. Even so, Le Corbusier's call for architecture to address the needs of the people was seen as radical because the architects at the Académie des Beaux-Arts had always focused on the privileged classes.

Thus, the Pavilion de *l'Esprit Nouveau* stood as Le Corbusier's "protest against the crepuscular program of the Exposition."⁸ The 400 square meter pavilion was divided into two parts, with the right half representing "in real full-size a whole unit" of housing.⁹

This “cell,” to use the architect’s term,¹⁰ was a basic element in his plan for a Contemporary City of Three Million Inhabitants, which (as we shall see below) was displayed in diorama form in the left half of the pavilion. Theoretically, this cell could be inserted, along with hundreds of other identical units, into the frame of an *immeuble-villa* (townhouse-villa), which would constitute the highest grade of housing in his urban plan. The structure of the cell was based on the principles of Le Corbusier’s 1914 Dom-INO building method, which he had developed after touring a devastated Flanders earlier the same year.

Dom-INO proposed a solution to the problem of mass-produced housing. To create a two-story home, three superimposed concrete slabs (6x9 m.) were held apart by six concrete columns. This made possible the elimination of load-bearing walls, resulting in an “open plan” house with maximum flexibility, and filled with natural light streaming through the ribbon windows that stretched almost the length of the wall. The resident would then be left to finish out the house according to his preferences, selecting standardized built-in interior cupboards, wardrobes, windows, etc.¹¹

The Pavillon de *l’Esprit Nouveau* was much more spacious than the Dom-INO house, with 200 square meters in a two-level plan that became a hallmark of Le Corbusier’s design. Still, it was anchored in the same principle of mass-producible housing and constructed in the same manner as the modest and practical Dom-INO house. A façade of windows, two stories high, illuminated the “open plan” communal living quarters downstairs (living room, dining area, small kitchen) and the second-floor mezzanine that held the private living space (bedrooms and bathroom).

As Le Corbusier noted, his plan eliminated all “cabinetmakers’ furniture.”¹² Instead, it provided substantial built-in storage space in the form of shelving and *casiers* or pigeonholes that also served as room partitions. Although Le Corbusier exaggerated in claiming that every element of the apartment, including furnishings and accessories, had been fabricated through mass production techniques,¹³ the pavilion’s design and construction did underscore the value of standardization. The windows and doors were commercially available; laboratory glassware served as vases, and some of the chairs had been purchased from a hospital supplier.¹⁴ In his inauguration speech, Le Corbusier stated, “Our pavilion [...] will be architecture and not decorative art; it will even have, thanks to this strict intention, an anti-decorative art attitude.¹⁵ He referred to the sparse unadorned furnishings as “equipment” to emphasize their functional purpose. These objects receded before the eye, allowing the visitor to focus on the architectural forms of the house and the art (the only handcrafted items in the house): paintings and sculptures by Picasso, Lipchitz, Ozenfant and Le Corbusier, himself. In the age of machines, art was the highest form of human expression, according to Le Corbusier. A “disinterested object” that cannot be mass-produced, it serves no practical function but satisfies the spirit.”¹⁶

A chair, on the other hand, was in Le Corbusier's view, a "machine for sitting" and a cog in the house, which was "a machine for living." A house should provide physical and spiritual comfort through the most efficient possible use of space, material, and labor. Furthermore, the lodging unit must itself be considered in the context of hundreds of replications assembled in the *immeuble-villa*, which in turn should not be conceived in isolation from the urban environment in which it would be situated. To demonstrate this intimate relationship linking chair, lodging, and city, Le Corbusier used the terrace attached to the pavilion to display the Plan Voisin, a plan for the urban renewal of an ancient Paris choked by the modern automobile and its accompanying pollution. The plan essentially applied his earlier utopian plan, the "Contemporary City of Three Million Inhabitants" (dating from 1922 and also on display in the pavilion), to the center of the capital city. The Plan Voisin created a scandal because it proposed razing most of central Paris to clear the way for the construction of twenty-four identical futuristic apartment towers standing sixty stories high. In Le Corbusier's diorama, the skyscrapers were lined up on a great expanse of grass punctuated with occasional planted trees. Cars zoomed along straight roads that had no visible walkways (which were relegated to another level). Tiny, privately owned airplanes dotted the sky, in the implicit assumption that they would one day be as mundane a form of transportation as the automobile. On the outskirts of the city stretched more horizontal apartment buildings, only a few stories high. These were the blocks that would contain apartments like the one on display in the Pavillon de *L'Esprit Nouveau*, each with a "hanging garden" like the terrace of the pavilion.

Visitors and critics expressed outrage at Le Corbusier's brutal proposal for Paris, under which virtually everything between the Seine and Montmartre would be demolished. Only a few historical monuments such as the Louvre, the Palais Royal, the Place des Vosges, Place de la Concorde and the Arc de Triomphe would be preserved.¹⁷ But the architect was making a provocative argument, more than proposing a real plan for execution.¹⁸ The neighborhoods slated for demolition in the plan contained many of the cramped apartment buildings not meeting modern standards of living and hygiene. He maintained that decent housing with access to sunlight and fresh air was a basic human need, indeed a right, and one that must be respected to calm the social unrest of the age.

Le Corbusier's radical departure from the concepts of furnishings, housing, and cities equally implied a radically different image of the residents targeted by his plans. In *L'Art décorative d'aujourd'hui*, he lashed out at prevailing assumptions linking social class to the accumulation of expensive possessions. In his opinion, this erroneous logic had led national values astray and corrupted the "proper" relationship between people and objects. He pointed to Louis XIV as the nadir in this trend. His era, still regarded in the twentieth century as the glory days of France, had invested objects with more power to make social distinctions than ever before. As such, they defined the elite of society. The ultimate confusion between iconic objects and human accomplishment could be summed up in Louis's devise, "L'Etat, c'est moi." In the same book, Le Corbusier describes a certain twentieth-century statesman:

Lenin is sitting on a caned chair at the Café Rotonde. He has paid for his coffee, twenty centimes, plus two more for the tip. He has drunk from a little white ceramic cup. He is wearing a bowler hat and a clean, smooth collar. For hours, he has been writing on sheets of typewriter paper. His inkwell is smooth and round, made of bottle glass.

He is preparing to govern one hundred million men.¹⁹

The contrast is sharp. In Le Corbusier's description, we see the modern "everyman". Lenin blends in with all the other café customers wearing clean collars and bowler hats. To his mind, objects serve their intended function efficiently and without fanfare. Realizing this, he has freed himself from the temptation to distinguish himself through luxury goods and is instead concentrating his efforts on the work before him. He understands that thought and action are what will earn him distinction. He will rise to the leadership of one hundred million men through his own capabilities and work ethic. This sums up Le Corbusier's thoughts on the difference between the anonymity of the modern statesman and the hyper-individualism of the absolute ruler, between meritocracy and absolute monarchy. Of course, even in 1925, the example of Lenin was provocative and problematic, but he was known to be unpretentious in manner and needs.²⁰

In Le Corbusier's estimation, the practice of using objects to create and mark social distinctions should have died out with the *ancien régime*, after which the Revolution ushered in a meritocratic social order. Instead, the French seem to have lost their way: in the Third Republic, "we find the bourgeoisie, teachers, editors, publishers, merchants, museums, even craftsmen, perpetuating the same monarchical values."²¹ Of course, he counted the Decorative Arts Exposition and, indeed, the decorative arts industry among the offenders.

Le Corbusier posited the Pavillon de *l'Esprit Nouveau* as an antidote to the anachronistic Louis XIV-type forces still in existence. The house and accompanying city plans gave concrete form to the *esprit nouveau* or "new (modern) spirit" embodied by Le Corbusier's *homme tout nu*. The "naked men," who formed the modern, meritocratic elite would value the concepts underlying the house: the healthful qualities of sunlight and fresh air; the efficient dimensions of the rooms, much as in an ocean liner stateroom;²² the mathematical proportions based on the human form²³ and the poetic geometry of walls intersecting the planes of floor and ceiling at right angles. The spirit of synthesis, in this case melding art, science, engineering, and nature to address the problems of the day, was a central characteristic of the "esprit nouveau," as Le Corbusier conceived it. His multidisciplinary journal of the same name (founded in 1920 with associates), presented another example of the thinking of *l'homme tout nu*. Along with synthesis, the architect valued clarity and purity of thought. Practicing this kind of intellectual rigor and discipline also carried a moral dimension that eschewed ornament or empty luxury.

Le Corbusier's *homme tout nu* sought freedom through order²⁴ at all levels—and here we see a parallel with his example of Lenin. This placed a paradox at the heart of the architect's vision, for his Pavillon de l'Esprit Nouveau and urban plan both addressed problems and set aspirations. All elements of the house were precisely reasoned right down to the pigeonholes and shelves, whose purpose and dimensions were assigned by the architect. For him, this microscopic level of organization minimized the chaotic and time-consuming details of daily life, freeing the mind for the creation of art. On a collective level, organization meant less waste of human labor and materials. At the same time, Le Corbusier believed in the power of architecture to shape societal values. He imagined l'homme tout nu, the aspirational man for the machine age, standing stripped – or rather freed – of the divisive markers of class (to some extent), culture and nation, distinctions which had been catastrophic for Europe and beyond. Among the first to advocate publicly and insistently for the development of an architecture for the masses, his hope was to mold humanity into a worldwide society of “naked men.” However, with the Pavillon and his urban plan, he was imposing idiosyncratic ideas in concrete forms under the guise of universal human proportions and basic human needs. Le Corbusier, architect and urban planner, viewing himself as foremost among the “naked,” had a blind spot when it came to seeing his own clothes.

¹See Nancy Troy, *Modernism and the Decorative Arts: Art Nouveau to Le Corbusier* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991) and Yvonne Brunhammer and Suzanne Tise, *Les Artistes décorateurs, 1900-1942* (Paris : Flammarion, 1990) for context.

²Carol S. Eliel, *L'Esprit Nouveau: Purism in Paris, 1918-1925* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2001), 48.

³*Exposition internationale des arts décoratifs industriels modernes, Paris 1925 : Rapport General*, v. 1, 19.

⁴Eliel, *L'Esprit Nouveau*, 48. The Deutscher Werkbund in Munich was founded in 1907 as a professional association bringing together artisans, scientists, engineers and industrialists to join forces in developing a modern aesthetic. These groups took a more holistic approach to producing items for daily life.

⁵Le Corbusier, *Urbanisme* (Paris: G. Crès et Cie, 1924), 220-2.

⁶Le Corbusier, *L'Art Décoratif d'aujourd'hui* (Paris: G. Crès, 1925), 22. I am using James I. Dunnett's translation in Le Corbusier, *The Decorative Art of Today* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1987), 22.

⁷Jean-Jacques Becker and Serge Bernstein, *Nouvelle histoire de la France contemporaine* vol. 12, *Victoire et frustrations: 1914-1929* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1990), 169.

⁸Le Corbusier, *Precisions*, 92, my translation.

⁹*Ibid.*, 92.

¹⁰Le Corbusier's use of this term reflects both the inspiration he felt before the simple adequacy of the monks' cells at the Ema Monastery in Italy, and the analogies he makes between his architectural concepts and natural organisms.

¹¹Le Corbusier, *Precisions*, 93.

¹²Ibid., 115.

¹³Mary McLeod, “Urbanism and Utopia, Le Corbusier from Regional Syndicalism to Vichy,” (Dissertation. MIT, 1986), 16.

¹⁴Eliel, *L'Esprit Nouveau*, 115.

¹⁵Le Corbusier, *Almanach d'architecture moderne* (Paris: G. Crès and Cie, 1925), 134

¹⁶Le Corbusier, *La Peinture moderne*.

¹⁷Eliel, *L'Esprit Nouveau*, 53.

¹⁸Nicholas Fox Weber, *Le Corbusier: A Life* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2008), 218.

¹⁹Le Corbusier, *L'Art Décoratif d'aujourd'hui*, 8.

²⁰See, for example, Bertrand Russell's comments in *The Practice and Theory of Bolshevism* (1921).

²¹Le Corbusier, *L'Art décoratif d'aujourd'hui*, 6.

²²Le Corbusier, *Precisions*, 115.

²³These proportions would take shape as the “Modulor,” developed by the architect in subsequent projects. See, for example, the Unité d'habitation de Marseille, built in 1947-1952.

²⁴Le Corbusier, *Urbanisme*, 202.

IMAGE CREDITS

1. Fondation Le Corbusier, © FLC/ARS, 2014²

4.3.

Official and Unofficial Spaces of the Budapest Millennial Exhibition, 1896

Dorothy Barenscoot

The Budapest Millennial Exhibition¹ opened to an international audience on May 2, 1896, and at first glance, all of the expected attractions and features of a nineteenth century world's fair were present. Located in the second imperial city of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the six-month-long exposition, while holding fast to the perceived expectations of tourists new to the city, encompassed the full range of predictable monuments to nation. Statues of ancient heroes, historical architecture and paintings, as well as markers of the host nation's civilization, such as Hungary's newly completed neo-classical Palace of Art, modeled on the German Kunsthalle and situated at the entrance to the fairgrounds, were offered up to visitors. Turning to any number of illustrated maps of the official Fair, the visible traces of exhibition organizers' attempts to exhibit Hungary's more public and readable "Western" face indeed manifested themselves in a typical, if not all together ordinary, nineteenth-century exhibition. This was also reflected in foreign press accounts that praised Budapest officials for putting on a Fair up to Western standards.² Here, visitors navigated officially sanctioned spaces and beautifully manicured green space with a carefully detailed map that led them on foot or via the small park train through a series of clearly delineated pavilions and points of interest (Fig. 1).



Figure 1. Arthur Heyer, *The Millennial Exhibition Grounds* (1896). Illustration. Reprinted in Gyula Laurencic. *Az ezeréves Magyarország és a milléniumkiállítás (The Millennium of Hungary and the National Exhibition)*. Budapest: Kunosy Vilmos 1896.

Temporarily staged in a large city park located on the farthest edge of Budapest's industrial district, the exhibition was also strategically located at the end of the city's widest and most luxurious new boulevard and between the city's two largest train stations. Modeling elements of World's Fairs and Universal Exposition venues dating back to London's Great Exhibition of 1851, the Budapest Millennial Exhibition simultaneously displayed an assortment of technological and industrial advancements along with a cross-section of the Empire's cultural offerings. These, together with the requisite sprinkling of amusements and a spectacle or two thrown in for good measure, complied with the standard recipe for successful events of this type. Created with city visitors and tourists in mind, the international exhibition's primary function was to familiarize and educate spectators with the broader themes of progress and modernity endorsed by the organizers, while normalizing the very same ideas within the context of national advancement.

However, by the summer of 1896, the focus of popular and international interest increasingly coalesced around the city of Budapest itself, and what could be described as more *unofficial* spaces of exhibition. One reason for this development was that the promotion and advertisements of the city's most visually and technologically interesting attractions and entertainments drew public attention beyond the fairgrounds. One such attraction was Continental Europe's first electrically powered underground subway, an engineering marvel bisecting the newest part of an expanding metropolis and punctuating Budapest's distinction as the fastest growing city in Europe; its inauguration was much anticipated.³ In turn, the phenomenon of emphasizing off-site venues of the Fair was perhaps best recorded in a host of international guides and books about Budapest that sprang up in the mid-1890's.⁴ For example, the guide entitled *Budapest's Amusements (A Múlató Budapest)*, published in English, French and Hungarian, described the various attractions and nightlife of the city, emphasizing all of the bohemian adventures available to its readers (Fig. 2).⁵



Figure 2. Unknown Illustrator, Book Cover, Lenkei, Henrik. *A Múlató Budapest (Budapest's Amusements)*. In Hungarian and French Editions. Budapest: Singer-Wolfner, 1896.

It included exhaustive lists of cafes, concert halls, cabaret restaurants where gypsy bands played, private exhibitions of panoramas, paintings, and cinema, as well as detailed descriptions of local haunts, such as the sumptuous Turkish baths and mineral spas dotting the city, all of which made Budapest a desirable tourist destination by the turn of the century.⁶

One locus of urban attractions was undoubtedly found in the grand reconstruction of a virtual Constantinople (Konstantinápoly Budapesten) on a large island on the lower right bank of the Danube. Advertised as a place of unparalleled amusement where visitors could experience a semblance of the Turkish and significantly Islamic capital, “with all of its peculiar characteristics and romance,” the venue blurred aspects of Hungary’s imagined and real connections to its eastern nomadic ancestry and life under Turkish occupation (from 1541-1699). Still, what was successfully promoted at this site was the ability of tourists to “visit” Constantinople while still safely within Hungary—a nod to the nation’s attempted distinction from more negative and stereotypical associations with its Eastern past. With an emphasis on night-time theatricality, costume, and illusionism, together with the display of new visual technologies and spectacles, the site operated in stark contrast to the more traditional pavilions and tidy daytime promenades of the Millennial Exhibition. Moreover, the evocative setting of a place at once associated with the former East Roman, Byzantine, and present day Ottoman Empires, managed to successfully promote a sense of the risqué and unexpected feelings necessary to impart the belief that visitors had seen and experienced something they would not otherwise have experienced at the official fairgrounds at the other end of the city.

The encounter of visitors with Budapest in 1896 could therefore be described, both spatially and metaphorically, as oscillating between varieties of perception, viewpoints that could be understood to be more “Western” or “Eastern” in flavor, respectively. To be sure, wherever the emphasis on Hungary’s oriental connections emerged, it was most often translated for popular fin de siècle audiences into associations with unexpected, clandestine, and hybrid exoticism. These ideas, relating to how visitors experienced Budapest, were already promulgated with the new high speed Orient Express traveling between Paris and the real Constantinople, located at the farthest outpost of Europe’s eastern border. In business since 1883, the long-distance passenger train operating out of France became *the* fashionable way to travel in the period, adding Budapest to its route in 1889 as a featured stop between the two distant locales—a literal manifestation of its situation between East and West. Budapest entrepreneurs, understanding the financial gain to be had from the potential tourists to their city, were savvy enough to recognize and highlight what would be understood by discerning fin-de-siècle tourists as the more fashionable bohemian and exotic flavors of Budapest. All of these mounting discourses of the capital in turn shaped people’s pre-existing and often jumbled fantasies and projections about the “exotic East,” whether it related to Bohemia and bohemian culture, nomadic peoples (such as the wandering Gypsies made famous by their musical concerts around Europe and America), the sexual availability of local women, or the frightening amalgam many associated with what was constructed as the largely indistinguishable cultures of Eastern nations.⁷ Consequently, not unlike in Paris, where the exploitation of the city’s bohemian element for profit had driven a new category of bourgeois tourist to the cabarets of Montmartre, there was a way in which the forbidden and exotic had become simultaneously normalized, popularized, and profitable in Budapest by the end of the nineteenth century.⁸

The phenomenon of coexisting and often competing official and unofficial exhibition venues also dovetailed with evolving promotion of the flexible category of “world’s fairs” by the end of the nineteenth century. The first generation of world’s fairs beginning in the mid-nineteenth century championed a public education angle for their attractions and sites of interest, but the fin-de-siècle exhibitions increasingly focused on spectacle and fantasy as a way to continue attracting audiences.⁹ At the same time, the commercialization and financing of fairs, which shifted away from strictly national and local government interests and into the hands of private investors, meant that many of the more novel attractions of the later exhibitions occurred outside the traditional venue of the exhibition fairground. For Budapest, following closely on the heels of Chicago’s successful World’s Columbian Exposition of 1893, there was a prevailing sense of wanting to copy or even outdo what had been shown in earlier expositions. In Chicago in 1893, the display of new technologies and spectacles had helped catapult the mid-western city to international stature as a modern metropolis—a fact that did not go unnoticed by the Budapest exhibition’s organizers.¹⁰ Thus, within elements of the Budapest public, the desire existed to extend the perceived boundaries of the Hungarian nation through the mechanisms of publicity and attention generated by the city as it prepared for its worldwide debut. At the same time, the promoters (an unlikely mix of Hungarian nationalists, cosmopolitan supporters of Budapest, and those entrepreneurs seeking to turn a profit during the event), together with Budapest exhibition organizers, recognized both the desire and the need to meet the expectations of the Budapest public and international visitors, many of whom anticipated the entertainments and off-site attractions of the exhibition as much, if not more, than the traditional displays.

¹Hungary’s Millennial Exhibition is deliberately referred to throughout this essay as an exhibition and not a world’s fair in order to examine the complexity of perception around the urban event as it unfolded in Budapest.

²“Hungary’s Great Celebration,” *New York Times*, June 9, 1896.

³Budapest’s claim to be the fastest growing city in the immediate years around the turn of the twentieth century is reiterated in contemporary accounts in the foreign press. It is also largely supported through official statistics in Thomas Hall, *Planning Europe’s Capital Cities: Aspects of Nineteenth-Century Urban Development* (London: Routledge, 1997), 264.

⁴See for example the following guides published in English: Joseph Kahn, F.A. Klein, *Practical English Guide to the City of Budapest* (Budapest: Joseph Kahn, 1896); *Hungary, Budapest with Fourteen Maps and Plans: Singer and Wolfner’s Handbooks for Travellers*, (Budapest: Singer and Wolfner, 1896); and Morice Gelléri, *The Millennial Realm of Hungary; Its Past and Present* (Budapest: Kosmos, 1896).

⁵Henrik Lenkei, *A Múlató Budapest (Budapest’s Amusements)* (Budapest: Singer-Wolfner, 1896).

⁶There exists a perceptible increase in books and feature articles published in foreign languages about Hungary and Budapest after the 1896 Fair. See especially the widely circulated F. Berkeley Smith, *Budapest: The City of the Magyars* (New York: James Pott and Company, 1903).

⁷For examples of these stereotypes, see Victor Tissot, *Unknown Hungary* (London: Richard Bentley and Son, 1881); Elizabeth Robins Pennell, "To Gipsyland," *The Century* 45 (1892) and "The Mystery of the Magyars," *New York Times*, March 22, 1896.

⁸For a discussion of developments in late nineteenth-century Paris, see Vanessa R. Schwartz, *Spectacular Realities: Early Mass Culture in Fin-de-siècle Paris* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998); also Mary Gluck, *Popular Bohemia: Modernism and Urban Culture in Nineteenth-Century Paris* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2005).

⁹These ideas are discussed in Alice Freifeld, *Nationalism and the Crowd in Liberal Hungary: 1848–1914* (Washington, D.C.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 268–78. Freifeld discusses, among other valuable details, the Budapest publics' interest in the attractions of the Chicago World's Fair of 1893.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, 270.

4.4.

Expo 67, or Megastructure Redux

Inderbir Singh Riar

Among its contributions, the 1967 Universal and International Exhibition, also known as the Montreal World's Fair and as Expo 67, promised to advance its cultural mission with avant-garde architecture. This was due to a wholly unique point of conception: a radically new kind of exposition was proposed by architects, not bureaucrats, who sought to resituate the civilizing purpose of modern architecture. Central to this ambition was an embrace of theories of the “megastructure”.

Emblematic of the optimistic large-scale thinking of the 1960s, the megastructure imagined a flexible framework capable of enclosing the functions of a city, thereby fostering new forms of human interaction, social control, and the technical organization of space. Innovative techniques of long-span structures were crucial to achieving these aims, as it was inside or under these long-span structures that a new mass public would be housed. Well before completion, key Expo 67 works were previewed heavily in the architectural press—notably Moshe Safdie's modular Habitat 67 housing complex, Buckminster Fuller's geodesic dome for the United States, and Frei Otto's tensile membranes floating above the West German pavilion. The impression was that at Expo 67 visionary megastructural expressions were on the cusp of realization.

The Expo 67 theme pavilion, “Man the Producer,” exemplified the era's utterly unique approach to the megastructure. Man the Producer embodied emerging discourses on lightweight, experimental structures (Fig. 1). At its most utopian, this pavilion served as a counter-project to the inherited values of modernism, projecting instead a new socio-technical realm to replace what was perceived, among avant-garde architects, as an arid functionalism. In contemporaneous discussions, however, megastructures had multiple definitions that were drawn equally from anthro-geographic connotations of group or collective form, and techno-scientific obsessions with mass production or cybernetics. The trajectory of this world's fair, which was planned at the start of a decade that was soon to witness sustained political upheaval, mirrored the conflict between ideas of spontaneous versus engineered social worlds, and suggested a tension in advancing megastructures as the paradigmatic architecture of late-modern life. The challenge remained to see whether large-scale experimental architectures, constructed at the Expo outside the norms of everyday life, could actually fulfill the demands of broader cultural representation.

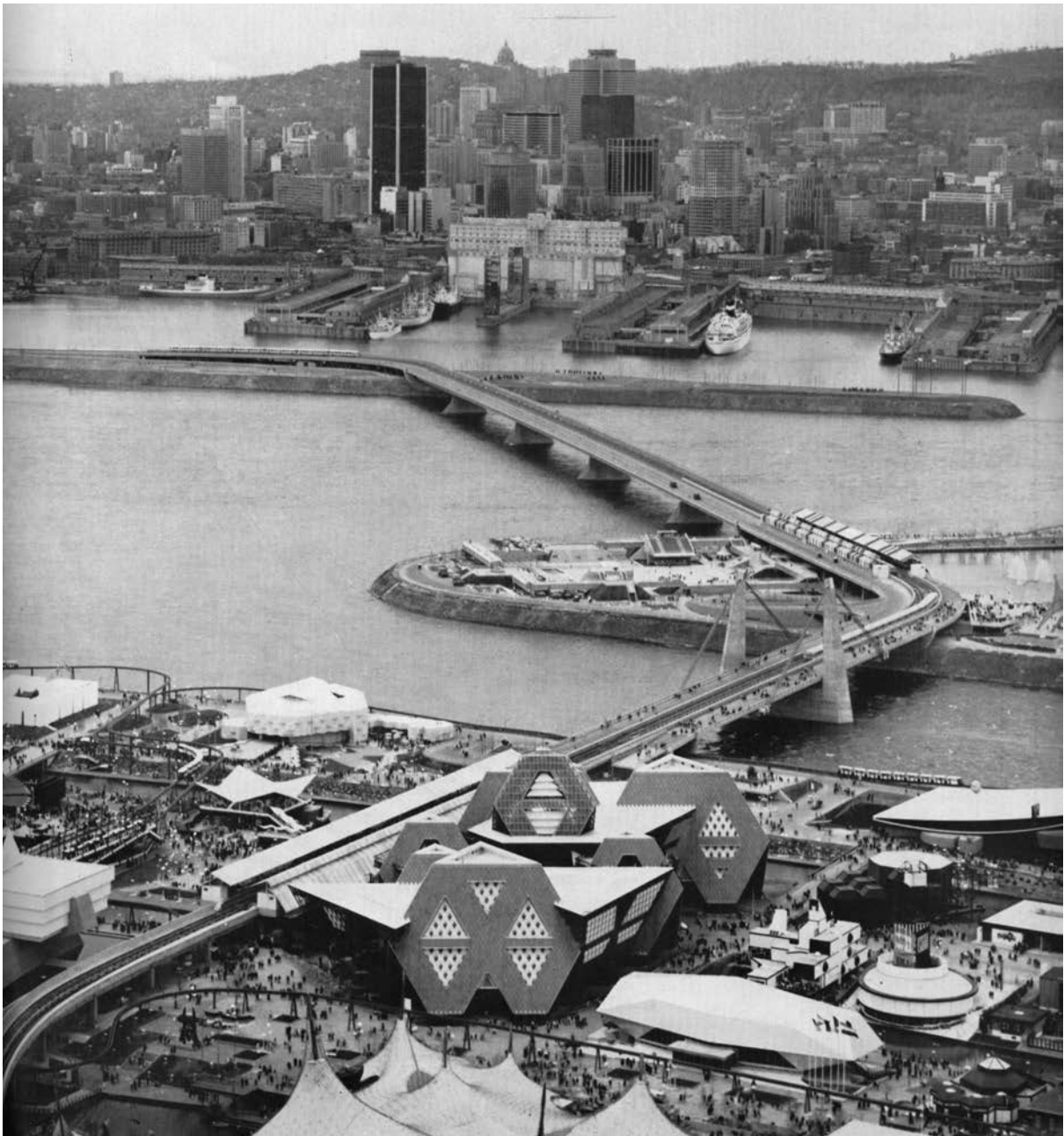


Figure 1. Expo 67 with Man the Producer pavilion in the foreground.

A THEME

The desire to create a world's fair as a showcase for radical architectural work was the result of a unique marriage of contemporary design theory and historical references. This ambition can be attributed to Daniel van Ginkel and Blanche Lemco van Ginkel, Montreal-based husband-and-wife architects and town planners. The van Ginkels were also key members of Team 10, the post-war avant-garde group seeking to reform the modernist "functional city" with an alternate experience of "community". Well ahead of the Bureau International des Expositions (BIE) award to Montreal for a world's fair in November 1962, the van Ginkels had, in consultation with other Montreal architects, begun conceptualizing an exposition. They advanced a fundamental polemic: to see the city as a theme. This was based on the reality of an "unprecedented volume of city building in the second half of the twentieth century" yet it stemmed equally from remembering that exhibitions with "the greatest international

impact were those at the end of the last century which had a very strong theme of universal appeal.”¹ Thus, an idea for the Expo’s theme as “Man in the City” was conceived as a scheme linking heritage sites, areas for housing prototypes, a zone for international pavilions, and transportation networks, all serving as means for Montreal’s own urban renewal. The plan accompanied Montreal mayor Jean Drapeau during his successful bid to the BIE. The van Ginkel’s proposal would, in the end, be short-lived, however, and the aim of revitalizing Montreal finally gave way to emblemizing nations through the exposition.

Nevertheless, something of the “Man in the City” theme would remain, conjured in the specters of the nineteenth century. Inspiration was to be found by looking backward, a century earlier, to those exhibitions entirely organized by works of innovative architecture and engineering. Invoking Joseph Paxton’s Crystal Palace of 1851, Frédéric Le Play’s Colisée de Fer of 1867, and Gustave Eiffel’s tower and Contamin and Dutert’s Galerie des Machines of 1889, the van Ginkels saw such works as embodying nothing short of a *Zeitgeist*.² The van Ginkels’ conscious return to sources kept with a modernist teleology, specifically that of Sigfried Giedion’s influential *Space, Time and Architecture* (1941) and Giedion’s belief that these ferro-vitreous behemoths represented the “constituent facts” of modern architecture.³ Giedion was an architectural historian and, importantly, the secretary-general of the Congrès International d’Architecture Moderne (CIAM), of which the van Ginkels had been members. Giedion sought “those tendencies which, when they are suppressed, inevitably reappear. Constituent facts in the nineteenth century are the new potentialities in construction, the use of mass production in industry, the changed organization of society.”⁴ The inexorable re-emergence of kinds of structures which had been submerged in the collective conscious of modernism, was, according to Giedion, inevitable in a world ready for spatial models to produce new forms of social life. Giedion declared these ideas in his 1943 call for a “new monumentality”, which posited reorganizing post-war city life by the design of civic centers and public spectacles—in short, event spaces not unlike those of world’s fairs.⁵ This new large-scale “expression of man’s highest cultural needs” was to be conveyed by lightweight metal forms, mobile elements, and, notably, heroic long-span constructions, with a host of atmospheric effects generated by light, color, and landscaping. These qualities recalled the 1889 Galerie des Machines: “a volume of free space [that] represented an entirely unprecedented conquest of matter.”⁶ According to Giedion, it was through lyrical, as opposed to strictly functional, ensembles that “architecture and city planning could attain a new freedom and develop new creative possibilities”.⁷ Circa 1967, freedom was to be found in a world’s fair, in its public spectacle fashioned from the technologies of lightweight, long-span structures.

The turn to engineered, modular, prefabricated nineteenth-century exposition buildings would shape the spatial—and cultural—charge of Expo 67. A select committee of Canadian intellectuals, including architects, met in Montebello, Quebec, in May 1963, and declared the central motif or theme of the future exposition to be “Man and His World”.⁸ The totalizing concept was divided into Man the Producer, Man the Explorer, Man the Provider, Man

the Creator, and Man in the Community. This ecumenical parsing was predicated on new kinds of constructions responding to the subdivisions of “Man”—specifically, as the van Ginkels and their architect allies had argued previously, with such *themes* becoming the components of a single structure, a group of buildings, or a compound (and replacing the traditional national pavilion, which the van Ginkels insisted had no place in an international exhibition).⁹ Two clear implications emerged from the choice of Man and His World and the accompanying sub-themes: first, an architectural work would be required to register at the scale of the urban; second, a unique aesthetic-organizational form would be needed to enable the qualitative equalization of things. The Expo 67 authorities would consequently promote cellular construction as a new directive to the architects of the world, to be exemplified in the buildings housing the Expo displays, with flexible space permitting “expansion or reduction as the need presents itself.”¹⁰ The concepts of *cell* and *flexibility* were cornerstones of the megastructural movement, as they reflected the movement’s rejection of fixed, recognizable units in favor of a built environment in a continuous state of flux.¹¹ Ideas about self-regulation—and the corresponding rearrangement of cultural norms—were central to the design of megastructures. Despite these theoretical underpinnings, and the involvement of Daniel van Ginkel as the chief planner of Expo 67, the reality of the Expo did not live up to the grand ideas of the planning stage. After only twelve months, van Ginkel left the project. Threats of resigning or being fired were leveled. It mattered little. In the end, the master plan of Man in the City was never achieved. Finally, built on a pair of artificial islands in the middle of the St. Lawrence River, and prey to political expediency, Expo 67 was largely atomized by national, cultural, and corporate pavilions, each competing with the others through shows of progressive or kitsch architecture.

Still, an attempt at coherence remained. Van Ginkel’s master plan had called for a series of Thematic Precincts corresponding to the five aspects of man. Meant to demonstrate strong architectural cohesion, the five precincts eventually devolved into the five official theme pavilions, each designed by a different architect. The design of the five pavilions was overseen by the Canadian Corporation for the World Exhibition (CCWE), which was the governing body of Expo 67, and the backbone of the exposition.¹² The CCWE hoped that the distinctive visual character of each pavilion would contribute to making the Expo theme recognizable. The aim was not only to present types of knowledge as the binding agents of Expo 67, but also to advance architectural innovation as a public culture in itself.

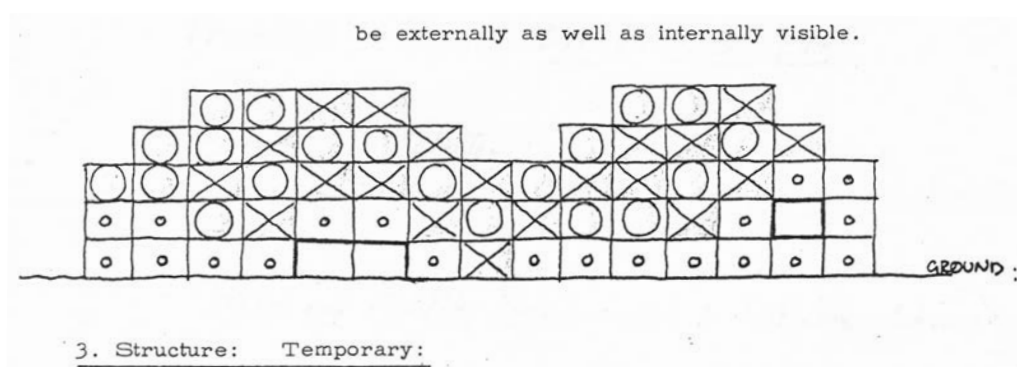


Figure 2. Expo 67 staff architect Adele Naudé’s “modular space system”.

Van Ginkel's staff architects had similar aims. In a key preliminary study, these young designers, all *bona fide* avant-gardists, had conceived of a singularly massive structure capable of bringing together all forms of human production.¹³ They devised a modular space system, able to grow or shrink, to accommodate movement patterns, and to allow variations in space closure.¹⁴ Stacked elements differentiated by Xs and Os, dots and voids, suggested some form of standardized assembly, piled in clusters but capable of continuous extension across a site (Fig. 2). Inside the structure, interwoven thematic subdivisions and cyclical movement patterns, based on interweaving storylines or threads, would allow the exhibition as *architecture* to be continuous.¹⁵ While not an environment of endless auto-construction, the pavilion was nevertheless designed as a collection of spaces easily reconfigurable as needs and themes arose. The impression was not unlike that of Yona Friedman's contemporaneous *Ville spatiale* conceptual project: gridded, lightweight infrastructures hovering above existing cities, inside which users would shape their own environments.

With the concepts of modular systems and storylines, the designers introduced a self-regulating element by which a large building could be devised. This cybernetic quality was fundamental to megastructuralist thinking: instead of fixed spatial patterns, users (future visitors at Expo 67) were, in theory, offered means to shape their environment and to determine their own patterns of behavior.¹⁶ (An early proposal insisted that the "spectator play a subjective role as creator in the process of linking exhibits."¹⁷) In greater discursive terms, especially in the schema of a theme pavilion, it meant replacement of the oppositional frameworks of modernism—whether in terms of the conflicts of history or, indeed, in the functional ordering of space in which absolute values like nature and technology were clearly juxtaposed—by new forms of cultural synthesis. Nations were imagined subordinated to peoples, politics to knowledge, ideologies to themes.

The theories embodied in the theme pavilion suggested ways to reconsider modern architecture and its public use in mass society. The idea of feedback or endless modification to a result (a theme, a building) by the factors producing it was thought simultaneously to grant agency to both people and technology (architecture). Instead of linear organization, continuous threads of circulation; instead of symbolic forms, modular structures lacking hierarchy; instead of singular functions, many practices and programs. It was a diagrammatic dream. All that remained, given the pressing reality of the world's fair, was to see what form the theme pavilion would actually take.

TETRAHEDRA

With van Ginkel's exit and the splintering of the Expo 67 master plan, the task of developing the theme pavilions was given to individual consulting architects. Sited at key points, the five buildings were meant to lend visual clarity to the fairgrounds. In circulating between them, visitors could continuously return to the underlying concept of the fair.

Yet the megastructural aims of the Expo staff architects—to realize a building as a *system*—ultimately appeared only in two works. *Man the Producer* and *Man the Explorer* were to be among the most-noticed and polemical works of architecture at Expo 67. Massive steel structures made of tetrahedral cells forming enormous floors and walls, the two pavilions would, in their technical achievement and discursive reception, crystallize the earliest aim of Expo 67: to express modernity through experimental architecture, capable of housing a mass public. In July 1964, the CCWE awarded *Man the Producer* and *Man the Explorer* to the Montreal architecture firm Arcop. Founded in 1957, Arcop (“Architects in Co-partnership”) was an increasingly established office working in an idiom of refined concrete detailing with Brutalist overtones. The commission for the two pavilions came with a single demand: “extensive studies on the development of an unusual design of the structural system.”¹⁸ The CCWE ambition was clear: the theme pavilion architecture, entirely experimental, would be a showcase in itself.

The design criteria were many. The pavilion was to “be of a temporary nature, [...] accommodate spans of over 100 feet, [...] form large volumes for exhibits, [...] be able to change its configuration during latter stages of working drawing production, [...] and be easily demountable.”¹⁹ Still, no one knew details of the proposed exhibits. Faced with this lack of information, the CCWE Advisory Committee on Architecture made a suggestion: “to design and prototype a building ‘system’ of prefabricated components which could be manufactured on the site.”²⁰ Arcop soon began advancing a series of studies on steel structures. Most were designs for elevated large boxes with trabeated frames, and largely uninspiring. One study, however, showed something more interesting: a July 1964 report on a “truncated tetrahedron”, which identified a basic unit cell that, when combined, could form walls and floor slabs, thereby allowing the designers to “recreate [it] at a large scale [with] sound structure and maximum flexibility.”²¹ With its apices cut, the truncated tetrahedron nested to form two parallel planes for floors, roofs, and walls. As Arcop indicated, this was hardly “‘Cartesian co-ordinate’ geometry” but a “cellular system” derived from “120° horizontal angles” (plan) and “sloping walls” (section).²² Corresponding sketches showed grouped hexagonal geometries as partitions and pathways obliquely crisscrossing a site, capturing and enclosing multisided space.

The tetrahedral shapes owed to a unique influence. With the CCWE’s insistence on experimental structures, Guy Desbarats, an Arcop partner, turned to an outside designer, Jeffrey Lindsay, an architect then pioneering the design of space frames, lightweight but extremely strong three-dimensional structural skeletons capable of spanning large areas. By the 1950s, space frames were being upheld as an alternate, even iconoclastic, vision for post-war modernism. Versed in this discourse, Lindsay would advance an innovative technique that, with aesthetic consequence, put the theme pavilions at the leading edge of megastructures. Of the two, *Man the Producer* received inordinate attention, due to its more erratically shaped mass and therefore more dramatic aesthetic and spatial effects.

The tetrahedral experiment was rooted in a key source: Lindsay's immersion in the work of Buckminster Fuller. Fuller, an autodidact designer and innovator, had famously asked, "How much does your building weigh?" This question was an exhortation against material waste in the name of optimal structural efficiency. Fuller would begin materializing such ideas at the Chicago Institute of Design, where, in 1937, the émigré artist László Moholy-Nagy had sought to re-establish the Bauhaus legacy of experimental design education. Starting in 1948, Fuller directed a series of intensive modeling-based studios that culminated in the design and construction of geodesic domes by student teams. Lindsay, recently demobilized as a bomber pilot in the Royal Canadian Air Force and without previous architectural training, joined Fuller in Chicago. The experience proved formative, and Lindsay continued working under Fuller for the next two years.²³ The work with Fuller would shape Lindsay's future space frames research, finally extending to Expo 67. Fuller would, of course, also make his own mark at Expo 67 with his spectacular 250-foot-diameter geodesic dome.

Lindsay's involvement in Fuller's applied pedagogy coincided with an especially decisive moment in Fuller's research. It stemmed from joint investigations of geometry and structure: first, exercises in topology, principally the segmenting and folding of spheres which could then be quantized into geodesic shapes; and, second, studies on the close packing of solids, which followed from Fuller's realization that spheres grouped tightly around a central nucleus do not form a larger composite sphere but produce instead a cuboctahedron (a polyhedron with 14 faces comprised of six squares and eight triangles, with all sides of equal length).²⁴ Both investigations confirmed Fuller's belief that natural forms operate with co-ordinates other than those of the Cartesian system.²⁵ As such, the phenomena of triangulation provided the basis of a primary constructional unit, eventually expressed in Fuller's geodesics.

Returning to Montreal in 1950, Lindsay drew on Fuller's experiments. Lindsay immediately established the Canadian Division of the Fuller Research Institute, which had been created in 1946 to foster inventions and the development of patents. While quickly realizing a series of prototypical works, it would be his very first effort that provided proof of Fuller's theories and their spatio-material possibilities.²⁶ The 8C270 Weatherbreak, built in Montreal's western suburbs, was a 49-foot diameter aluminum geodesic dome with plastic skin. The Weatherbreak was erected by Lindsay with a team of six untrained assistants in eight hours, and moved to its site by ten men on a snowy day in December 1950 (Fig. 3). As the first large-size tube and skin geodesic structure built as a test of Fuller's theories, the Weatherbreak became well known through its wide circulation in images.

Consequently, Lindsay's work found common cause with a greater project of subsuming geodesics under growing discourses on "space frames". When *Architectural Forum* editor Douglas Haskell looked into his "crystal ball" in 1951, he divined that space frames would not only lead toward a new order of construction but produce a vast new industrial

creation—a future he projected a quarter-century ahead, with the emblematic building of 1975 singularly illustrated as none other than Lindsay’s Weatherbreak.²⁷ No fewer than ten articles on space frames appeared from 1951 to 1954 in *Forum* alone.²⁸ In early 1953, the magazine asked, “Is this Tomorrow’s Structure?”—a question answered in a lead article by the British structural engineer Felix Samuely. Samuely had designed the remarkable space frame roof over the Pavilion of Transport at the 1951 Festival of Britain, and felt himself “on the eve of a great revolution”: “Hundreds of years hence, people will look back on this time as the one when construction changed over from ‘plane’ to ‘space’ and saw the birth of a new architecture.”²⁹ From *plane* to *space*: to enthusiasts, space frames, which were inexpensive, easy to produce, and structurally efficient, manifested a late-avant-gardist faith in the imminence of a dematerialized world in which art, science, and technology were inextricably interwoven.³⁰ As such, space frames represented, to the likes of Lindsay, a critical argument on design. The main points of this argument were opposition to any preordained aesthetic program, the understanding of social needs as paramount, and faith in technological innovation as a provider of solutions for these needs.

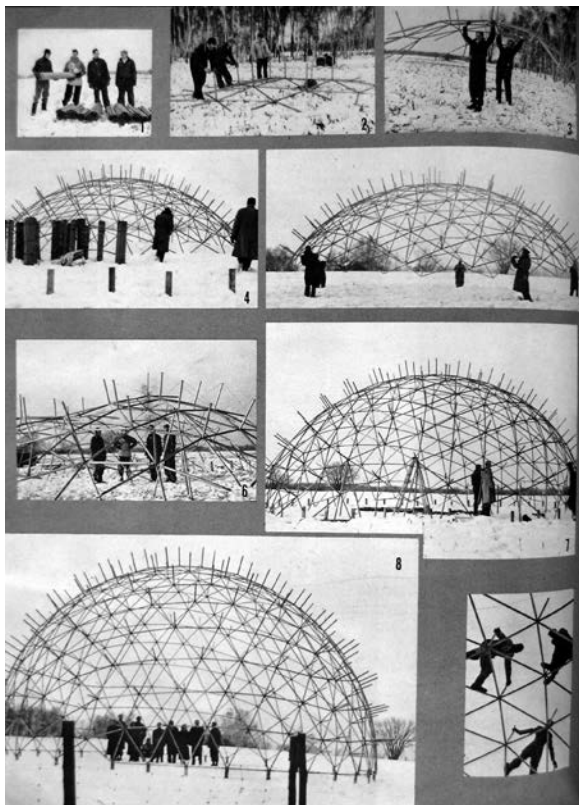


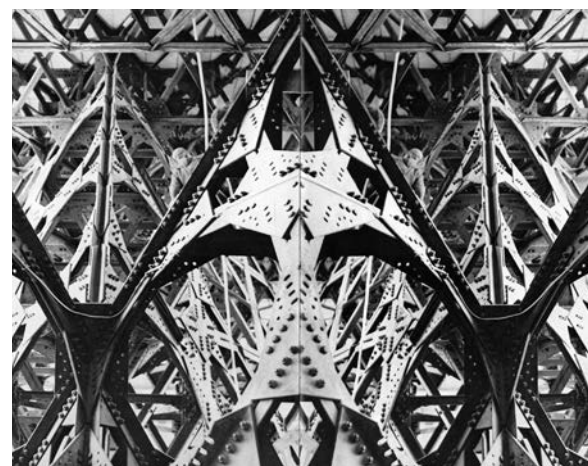
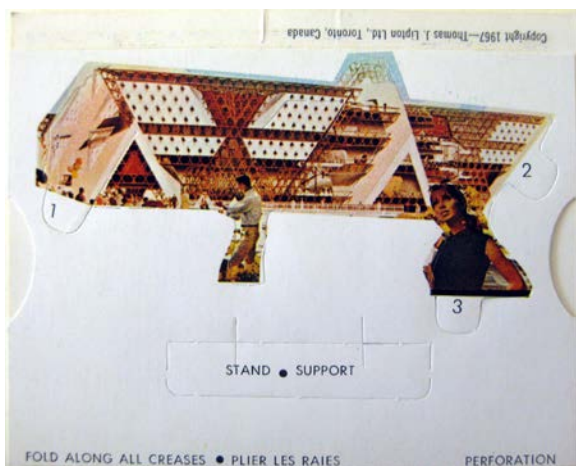
Figure 3. Jeffrey Lindsay’s 8C270 Weatherbreak (1950).

Man the Producer, as a megastructural embodiment of the ideals of Expo 67, was influenced by this discourse and rhetoric. By the mid-1950s, Lindsay had emerged as an expert on space frames in his own right. His work and teaching appeared in architectural magazines, and he established Jeffrey Lindsay and Associates-Space Frames in 1957 with offices in Montreal and Hollywood. In the same year, Lindsay predicted: “The trend is away from steel and concrete systems and towards the newer high speed techniques of the structural physicist, specifying natural configurations comprised of mass-produced components.”³¹ Space frames, it seemed, departed from traditional notions of statics and toward presumably more theoretical speculations that would, Lindsay believed, follow from and result in natural configurations, indicating the

perfection embodied by such structures.³² Here, again, technology and mass-production were, in keeping with Fuller’s ideas and others’, thought to mirror nature, creating an endless permutation of forms from a few basic components. The bio-constructive model became fundamental to Man the Producer. The genetics of the pavilion were, Lindsay claimed, implicit in the cells of the pavilion as realized.³³ The impression was immediately

and powerfully felt. Floors, walls, ramps, skin, and structure—all appeared from the same repeating unit. The expansive honeycomb, at once intimate and overwhelming, responded to the desire for a total space.

The cell allowed Arcop a unique advantage. The architects could proceed without direct knowledge of the exhibit contents. They were, after all, charged with providing a system that could change. Standardized parts allowed for on-site modifications of the overall form. The structure would be bolted together, an assembly made of 3'-3" lengths of bent 6"-wide steel plate chords, joined by gusset plates which were angled at 70- and 110-degrees, dictated by the tetrahedral geometry. In April 1966, as the storied Dominion Bridge Company began to bolt Man the Producer's first sections to concrete footings, observers saw rising giant frames crossing over, slipping past, and disappearing behind one another—hollowed ziggurats, their canted faces seemingly meshed together and receding to an endless latticed world beyond (Figs. 4 and 5).



(LEFT) Figure 4. Man the Producer. | (RIGHT) Figure 5. The tetrahedra of Man the Producer.

For all the typical precision of space frames, here the effect was of something altogether rougher, even chaotic. The resulting assembly felt dense with material; the oversized gusset plates confused the expected effect of lightness. Curiously, Lindsay admitted that the aesthetic was unintentional. Despite obvious enthusiasm for prismatic structures, Lindsay saw in Man the Producer “a rudimentary appearance which successfully enriches and disguises the pristine symmetry, usually the distinction of space structures.”³⁴ The design project inherited by Lindsay and others from the likes of Fuller saw aesthetics and technologies as one and the same, collapsed together in pristine symmetry. Yet in his word “rudimentary,” Lindsay hinted at something more, a kind of surplus aesthetic value that, in a way, granted greater symbolic purpose to the pavilion. Perhaps it was in this phenomenal effect, deep within a world of shadow, of mystery, of depth, on seven levels totaling 190,000 square feet, that man’s relations to the world were to be revealed.

“DUMB AUTHORITY”

Late in spring 1967, the critic and historian of modern architecture Reyner Banham found himself, much to his chagrin, stuck in a queue. Correspondent to the British cultural magazine *New Society*, Banham stood amidst the Expo 67 crowds, and wondered, “When you think that this Expo is officially subtitled ‘*La Terre des Hommes*’ and what fun they had with *la Terre*, dredging up artificial islands and lagoons and things all over the Saint Lawrence, it is astonishing how little they do with *l’Homme*.”³⁵ Banham’s sarcasm stemmed from his belief that the exposition was largely incapable of resolving “the \$64,000 problem of all great exhibitions—l’homme, Mensch, folks, gente, us lot.”³⁶ Despite being “viewed through the filters of statistic and the lenses of rhetoric, notwithstanding being sentimentalized in technicolor and stereophonic sound, and regardless of being hectored, directed and asked to respect the yellow line at the edge of the platform, *man* was largely written out of the act: hardly anyone has had the wit to put him on stage.”³⁷ Architecture, it seemed, was inadequate to its task of cultural representation.

Banham’s view on Expo 67 was tied to his ongoing reconsideration of modernism. Concluding his *Theory and Design in the First Machine Age* (1960), a critical reappraisal of the Modern Movement, Banham had insisted that, now, the contemporary architect must “discard his whole cultural load” and “run with technology”.³⁸ Banham anticipated a “Second Machine Age” (and Buckminster Fuller its sage), with personal technologies, including architectural technologies, enabling people to modify their environment at will. The prediction was that a leisure society would come to be realized, popularly understood as the result of eventual technological advances that would render human labor unnecessary. In Banham’s opinion, the emblematic (but unrealized) embodiment of this future was Cedric Price’s Fun Palace (1964). The Fun Palace was a large, adaptable framework with demountable interactive technologies providing popular education and entertainment. Price thought of his project as “essential to eliminate unreal division between leisure time and work time”—a sentiment echoed in Banham’s view of it as a “kit that the non-institutionalised aspects of leisure can improvise upon”.³⁹ In this analysis of the Fun Palace, Banham betrayed a guiding determinism, shared by the megastructural avant-garde, which held technology as “morally, socially and politically neutral”.⁴⁰ The apolitical sentiment reflected his replacement of architecture with the preferred euphemism, environmental control.

Banham’s misgivings pointed to a greater cultural crisis. Expo 67 was expected to proclaim its modernity via display of visionary architectural forms. The van Ginkels’ exhortation to recall the colossal precedents of 1851, 1867, or 1889 was to harness their socio-technical power, as expressed in long-span structures. The socio-technical power of these large structures, whether in 1851 or 1967, invariably revealed an internal tension. Architecture that was consciously articulated as mass-produced and cellular could not present a critique of the world in which it appeared, without at the same time challenging its own right to existence.⁴¹ Yet the ferro-vitreous and tetrahedral forms were meant to do just that: on the one hand, to achieve an intense form of means-ends rationalization owing to the demands

of quick assembly, public exhibition, and removal from process of everyday life; on the other hand, to create a new public space with the aesthetics of advanced technology.

What, then, of Expo 67 as a projection of the future according to avant-garde architecture? Banham appeared at first unhopeful, berating “Ministers of culture, trade, information and other forms of glass-beads-for-the-Wogs” for “forgetting that the major contributions to architecture at great 19th century exhibitions were made, typically, by Eiffel (an engineer) and Paxton (a gardener).”⁴² With the reconfigurable system of the Crystal Palace as his ideal, Banham insisted that any “man-made feature of the landscape”—here, a pavilion—would have to approximate the effects of the ever-changing “people-garden”—the spectacle of *ad hoc* queues where he found the public life of the fair:

The only place where the human race was fully written into the act is in the most underrated, yet probably the best, building there—the Canadian theme pavilion “*L’Homme à l’Oeuvre*.” Architected by the Affleck-Desbarats partnership (locals again) it is ... hum ... well ... like, *try to imagine* a cross between Piranesi, the Eiffel Tower, and the Fun Palace project. An incomprehensibly endless-seeming structure of rusting steel tetrahedra, rational but romantic.⁴³

Man the Producer was meant to exhibit humankind’s mediation of the world by technology, but Banham did little to promote this thematic “fix”. Invoking the dark mysteries of Piranesi’s *Carceri*, his mid-eighteenth-century drawings of imaginary labyrinthine subterranean prison spaces, and the theatrics of Price’s Fun Palace, Banham emphasized instead a new kind of spatial experience revealed in the seemingly infinite web:

It has the dumb authority of a primitive industrial plant, and through it are threaded staircases and escalators, delivering the visitor to galleries and walks and platforms, on and from which he sees other visitors living, moving and having their being and vanishing from time to time into dark holes to view theme displays ... and emerging, slightly to their surprise, on walks and galleries they didn’t remember seeing before. It is so vast and three-dimensionally complex that in three visits I know I didn’t visit every exhibit, work every gadget, walk every platform—it is an Expo in itself. And because it is so vast and complex, it swallows queues before they form, and permits almost random circulation inside.⁴⁴

It was not only the absorption of the dreaded queues that impressed Banham; it was, really, the feeling that deep inside this “incomprehensibly endless-seeming structure”—“rational but romantic”—people were living, moving, vanishing, and emerging. Consciously disentangling visitors from the exhibits they supposedly saw, and presumably enjoyed, Banham described instead an environment that privileged the itinerant and, accordingly, the fluid interactions between people themselves.

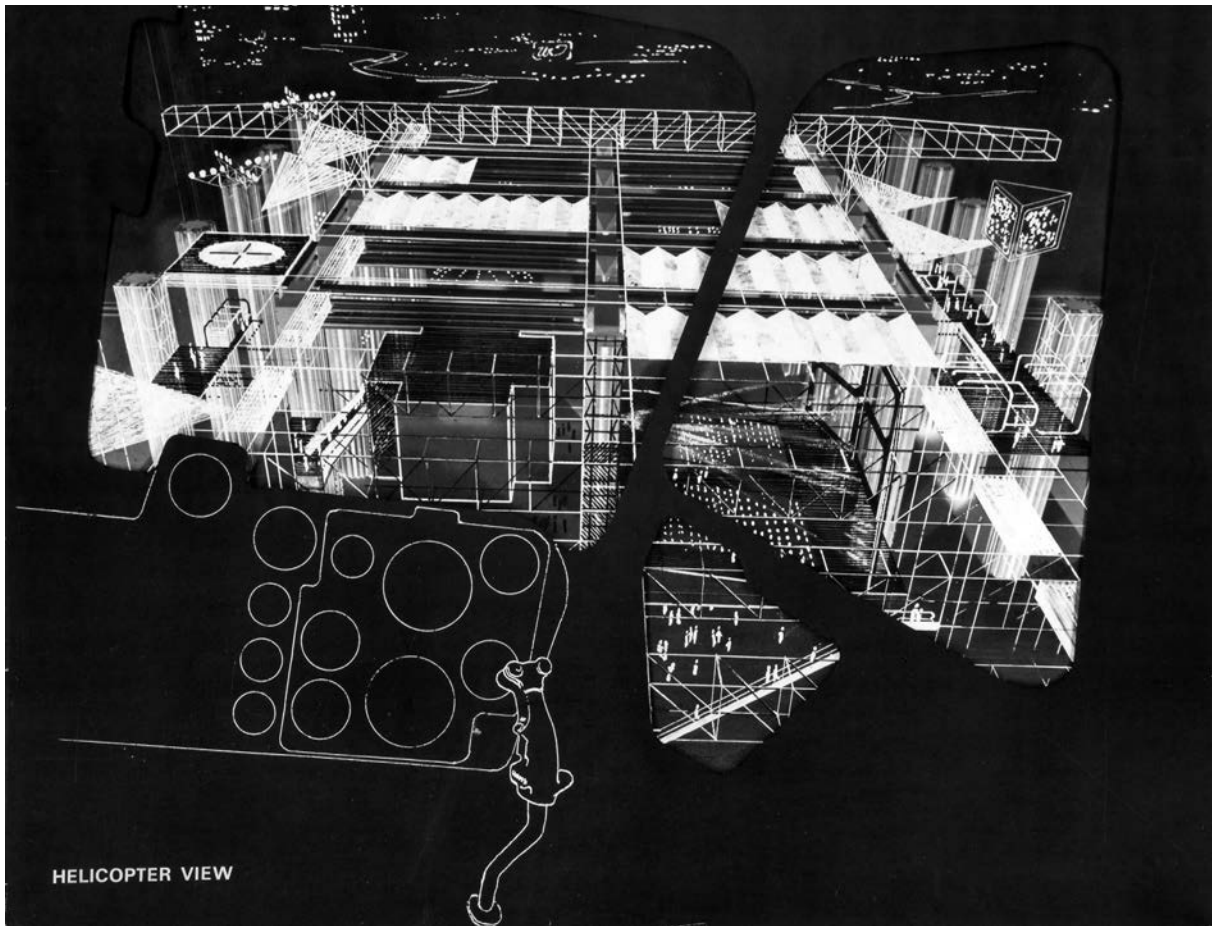


Figure 6. Cedric Price, Fun Palace, c. 1964.

In the visceral, *collective* experience of an unadorned but breathtakingly huge system, Man the Producer revealed utopian possibilities. As discussed in *Progressive Architecture* magazine specifically at Expo 67, space frames not only represented “the search for economic means of spanning and enclosing large spaces” but also became “*social structures*”.⁴⁵ Long spans constructed this social scape by the immediate provision of massive shelter and enclosure. Yet there was something more. Banham’s consciously ludic reading suggested, however willfully, that man could be liberated from the secretive and hermetic world of industrial production. With fairgoers inhabiting and reading outward from the basic cell to the overall system, the pavilion made evident both literal and phenomenal aspects of its own construction. Deep inside the tetrahedra was a growing experience of the sublime, a collective awe for the technological conquest of matter (Fig. 5).⁴⁶ The effect was heightened by the steel’s oxidization.

Architectural journals consistently disregarded the exhibits inside, focusing almost exclusively on the aesthetic pleasures of the space frames. Photographs appeared deliberately foreshortened, with triangles telescoping toward one another and layer upon layer of structure collapsing upon itself, as if mirrored or receding to infinity. Other views started far inside the pavilion, bounded on all sides by tetrahedra, and looked across a massive void—a canal, an atrium—beyond which more levels extended, revealing the entire structure raised off the ground as if purposefully floating above the mundane world of the

fairgrounds. Magazine layouts showed an ambiguity between inside and out, and reversal at night found the pavilion glowing from within, the tetrahedra creating infinite triangular apertures, demarcating the pavilion against the darkened sky in ghostly fashion. When photographed, the megastructure appeared, at times, simply to dematerialize.

From the start, the genealogies of Man the Producer were traced to the nineteenth century. Long-span structures, it was believed, had capacities to fashion spaces that could engender a new social compact. The dialectic construed between ferro-vitreous materials and tetrahedral forms, to leverage the past in visions of the present, to find the present in suggestions of the past, was to dream of uniting aesthetico-technical and socio-spatial phenomena as collectively beheld. Sigfried Giedion's reading of nineteenth-century expositions as truly modern was to believe in an original "aesthetic response," driven by innovations in iron construction and the programmatic temporariness of the fairs, in which "a new poised equilibrium of all the parts of a structure began to appear"—and, perhaps, *to disappear*, "in the overcoming of gravity in apparently floating constructions."⁴⁷ Thus did the Crystal Palace, for all its prefabrication and serial production, have the impact of a fairy story: "Industry, after all the blight and disorder it had brought about, now displayed another and gentler side, aroused feelings that seemed only to belong *to the world of dreams*."⁴⁸ Quoting a German political exile who observed the 1851 exhibition, Giedion asked, "Are there counterparts of the Crystal Palace among the paintings of the period—any paintings, that is, which give 'no idea of the actual size or distance involved,' and where 'all materiality blends into the atmosphere'? There are none."⁴⁹ The romanticism implicit in Giedion's evocation evoked the sublime qualities of engineered work.

Giedion's romanticism was also an uncanny echo of other London exiles. In 1848, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels had described the ceaseless revolutionizing of production and consequent uninterrupted disturbance of all social conditions, and prophetically declared: "All that is solid melts into air."⁵⁰ For Marx and Engels, this was to be the sober realization of the real conditions of life. Sobriety came from recognizing the materialization of social and spatial relations; if this was a demystification of production, then what of architectures resulting from industrialized means but effecting, as Giedion felt, "to dematerialize landscape and dissolve it into infinity"?⁵¹ The answer lay in believing that, somehow, under certain conditions, industrialization brought about a re-enchantment of the world.⁵² Hence Giedion's elevation of the Crystal Palace to "the world of dreams" achieved "through the agency of transparent glass and iron structural members;"⁵³ hence Banham's transposition of Man the Producer to a ludic realm by virtue of meandering inside its "incomprehensibly endless-seeming structure of rusting steel tetrahedral;" hence Lindsay's pleased conjunction of the "prismatic" and the "rudimentary". In these almost hallucinatory readings was a refusal to see Man the Producer as a pavilion—that is, as an institution in which the relationships between individuals and technologies were normalized. Giedion's, Banham's, and Lindsay's interpretations also demonstrate belief in the ongoing exercise of modernity and that its most consequent architecture, which

could transform social experience, was achievable only by the constant refinement of seemingly light, flexible, and sufficiently massive architectural technologies and techniques. It was hardly surprising that such a fleeting utopia was found, if at all, in a world existing for the span of the 1967 Exposition only—just six short months.

¹H.P. Daniel van Ginkel, Letter to Michel Chevalier (July 16, 1962): 1, Fonds van Ginkel 27-A21-11, Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montreal.

²Van Ginkel Associates, “Montreal World’s Fair 1967” (July 28, 1962): 1-2, Fonds Van Ginkel 27-A21-04, Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montreal.

³Sigfried Giedion, *Space, Time and Architecture* (1941; Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1956, third edition), 18ff.

⁴*Ibid.*, 18.

⁵J.L Sert, F. Léger, and S. Giedion, “Nine Points on Monumentality” (1943), in Joan Ockman, ed., *Architecture Culture 1943-1968* (New York: Columbia Books on Architecture/Rizzoli, 1993), 29-30. Giedion’s coauthors were the modern architect José Lluís Sert and the painter Fernand Léger.

⁶Giedion, *Space, Time and Architecture*, 268.

⁷Sert, Léger, and Giedion, “Notes on Monumentality,” 30.

⁸Lucien Piché, Letter to Paul Bienvenu (May 31st, 1963): 1-2, Fonds van Ginkel 27-A21-04, Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montreal. The Expo 67 theme was borrowed from the title of French aviator-philosopher Antoine de Saint-Exupéry’s 1939 memoir *Terre des Hommes*.

⁹R. Affleck, Michel Chevalier, R. Lemoine, Hazen Sise, H.P.D. and B.L van Ginkel, “1967 Montreal World Fair” (October 29, 1962): 3, Fonds Gilles Gagnon, 39-1991-02-005, Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montreal. Well before the seminal Montebello conference, these Montreal architects had identified “Man and His World” as an organising principle.

¹⁰“‘Cellular’ Construction”, *Expo Digest*, 1/20 (November 18, 1964), 1-2.

¹¹Alan Colquhoun, *Modern Architecture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 223.

¹²Affleck, Desbarats, Dimakopoulos, Lebensold, Sise, “Preliminary Report on Theme—Site Study” (July 17, 1963): 1, Fonds Guy Desbarats, Folder 9, Series 2, D03, 109-26-TD, Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montreal; *Pavilion Architecture* (Canadian Corporation for the 1967 World Exhibition, 1965): 1.

¹³Van Ginkel’s staff on the Expo 67 master plan included Moshe Safdie, Adele Naudé, Jerry Miller, and Steven Staples. Safdie had been van Ginkel’s student at McGill University and was consequently versed in Team 10 thought; he would later realise Habitat 67. Naudé, Miller, and Staples graduated from Harvard’s new urban design programme, bringing with them avant-garde theories on city planning. Naudé also had worked with Shadrach Woods, a key Team 10 figure.

¹⁴Adele Naudé and Jerry Miller, “Organization of the Thematic Area” (November 19, 1963), collection of Steven Staples, Toronto.

¹⁵*Ibid.*

¹⁶Colquhoun, *Modern Architecture*, 222.

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4.5.

The Restoration of the New York Hall of Science

Raymond M. Pepi | Christopher Gembinski | Laura Buchner

THE GREAT HALL

Designed by Wallace K. Harrison and constructed for the 1964-65 World's Fair as the New York Museum of Science and Technology, the New York Hall of Science (NYSCI) was one of the many fair buildings to reflect America's infatuation with space travel during the 1960s. Unlike most of the other fair buildings that were demolished when the fair ended, the Hall of Science was planned as a permanent museum and stands today as a landmark of mid-century design.

This paper is focused on conservation aspects of the exterior restoration. The overall project is under the aegis of Ennead Architects who engaged Building Conservation Associates, Inc. to assist in developing specifications for the repair of exterior concrete and dalle-de-verre elements at the Hall of Science. The investigation and construction of this restoration program not only saved the existing concrete fabric of the building but also succeeded in preserving the experience of being in its vast interior space. The exterior restoration of the Great Hall completed in 2010 and interior restoration work completed in 2014 have revitalized this space for this highly influential science museum.

The primary exhibition space, referred to as the Great Hall, consists of a ninety-foot high, single-story building, set on a hexagonal plinth. A sinuous plan and exposed concrete walls distinguish the tower façade. Although the building façade is largely preserved, the landscape in which it sits has been significantly altered. A reflecting pool with gushing fountains originally bound the perimeter of the Great Hall, except at the entrance walkway that was located at an overlap in the serpentine walls. There, visitors passed through revolving doors into the main exhibition space. Models of two twenty-foot long space taxis and a thirty-foot by twelve-foot orbiting space laboratory, precursors to the Shuttle and Skylab, hung from the ceiling of the Great Hall as part of the multi-media show "Rendezvous in Space," which employed a motion picture and sound effects to simulate a space taxi docking into the laboratory.¹ The hexagonal base of the building, accessible by a grand staircase at the east end of the Great Hall and an elevator at the west end, served as additional exhibition space.

The design vocabulary of this structure is unique. A cast-in-place concrete framework of columns and beams, creates a honeycomb-like façade approximately thirteen inches thick. The Hall's plan is delineated by twenty-two curved sections of wall, each twenty-eight spandrel levels high and nine columns wide, with five vertical strips of rebar embedded in each column and four horizontal strips in each beam.² During the original construction, the façade framework was cast in relatively small batches of only ten cubic yards daily at a concrete plant on site.³ Concrete lifts produced by these small pours are evident on the building exterior in the form of varying colors, hues, and values.

One-inch thick concrete dalle-de-verre panels fill each opening in the cellular concrete framework, creating a nearly flush exterior façade and a deeply coffered interior (Fig. 1). The primarily cobalt blue, translucent glass slabs that constitute the panels allow light to penetrate the dark hall, evoking the feeling of journeying through the cosmos.



Figure 1. Great Hall façade. The freestanding wall at the left of the image overlaps the serpentine plan to create the original building entrance.

DALLE-DE-VERRE PANELS

Dalle de verre, a twentieth-century material, employs thick glass slabs (“dalles”) cast in a “plastic” moldable material. Conchoidal chips or facets in the dalles produce variations in light transmission and add a prismatic effect to the glass. Early dalle-de-verre panels consisted of glass set in a wire-mesh reinforced concrete matrix. Manufacturers later substituted epoxy for concrete. Although epoxy panels were available during the period of the Great Hall's construction, the architect chose concrete panels, coated with epoxy.

The Blenko Glass Company of Milton, West Virginia specially cast one-inch thick pot metal glass in five different shades of cobalt blue for the Hall's panels. Eight-inch squares were used whole and were hand cut to a variety of dimensions, some less than one-inch square. Harrison wanted the panels fashioned with only blue glass, but Willet Studios adamantly argued for the inclusion of small ruby, gold, and green dalles to accent the panels; Harrison eventually agreed but insisted that the manufacturer employ the odd colors sparingly (Fig. 2).⁴

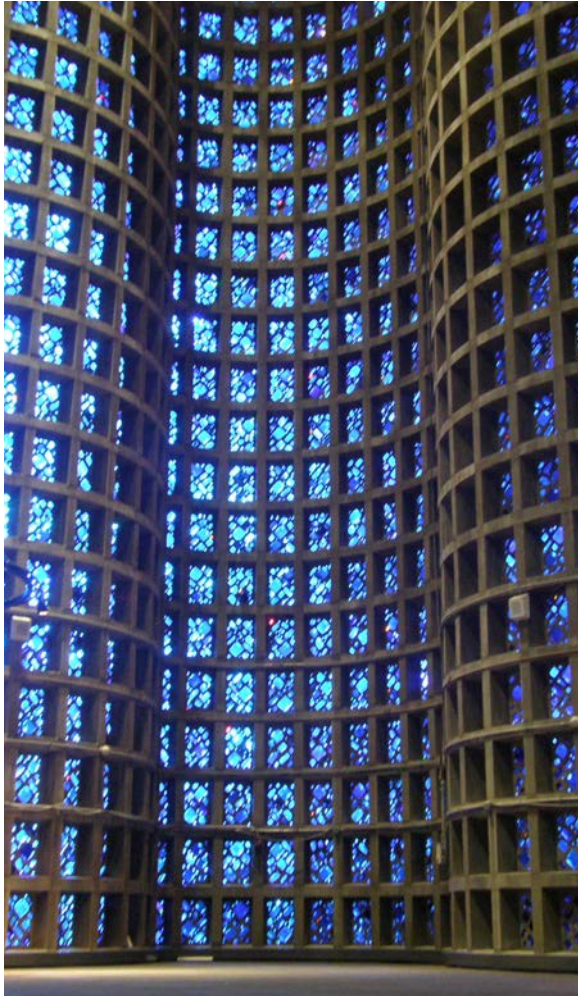


Figure 2. Interior of the Great Hall with deep coffer walls illuminated by translucent dalles.

Willet Studios of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, designed and produced the Great Hall panels, working seven days a week for nearly a year.⁵ The panels were fabricated by setting the glass and ferrous wire reinforcement in a matrix of Corson's Home-Crete Sand Mix. Willet Studios used 125 tons of Home-Crete for this purpose and coated panels with two coats of Benesco epoxy resin for waterproofing after the concrete mixture cured.⁶ Before installation, the coated panels were subjected to laboratory testing to ensure they could withstand hurricane force winds exerting up to twenty-five pounds per square foot static pressure. To simulate the power of one hundred mile per hour winds, workers sprayed water on the exterior panel surfaces while creating a vacuum on the opposite side.⁷

At the time of construction, with approximately 5,400 panels measuring over 30,000 square feet in total, the Hall of Science was reported to be the largest dalle-de-verre installation of its type in the world.⁸ When the Great Hall opened in September 1964, one New York Times reporter described the effect:

Here, one thinks immediately of the 13th century rather than the 20th; of Sainte-Chapelle; of the drama of soaring heights stained with colored light. For this is a Cathedral of Science, rather than a Hall of Science, its luminous blue walls suggesting limitless extensions of space. At a time when science vies with religion in explaining the mysteries of the universe, this is an oddly significant architectural twist.⁹

DETERIORATION OF BUILDING MATERIALS

Reinforcing bar in concrete requires an alkaline environment to remain rust free. After long-term exposure to atmospheric carbon dioxide and water vapor, alkaline components in the concrete are transformed into lower pH components in a process referred to as carbonation. This altered environment permits rust to form on the rebar, particularly rebar close to the surface of the concrete. As steel corrodes, it increases in volume, creating expansive forces in concrete that cause cracks and spalls. Carbonation and the resultant corrosion were the foremost mechanisms for deterioration of the cast-in-place concrete at the Hall of Science. In isolated areas of the Hall's vertical columns, soffits, and sills, the concrete cover was as little as one sixteenth of an inch when it should have been at least two inches. Such thin concrete coverage over the rebar, an inherent flaw in the building's construction, created on-going maintenance issues due to cracking and spalling of the concrete surface. A 1990 repair campaign included the installation of numerous patches, but by 2005 most of these had begun to fail, and cracks and spalls had formed in previously sound original concrete, indicating a pattern of ongoing decay (Fig. 3).

The primary deterioration of the building's dalle-de-verre panels included cracks radiating from some of the dalles to the edges of the panels. Cracks also commonly occurred where embedded wire ties attached the panels to the framework. However, the wire-mesh reinforcement within the panels successfully held together even the most severely cracked units. Close inspection of the panels revealed erosion of the original epoxy coating and friable concrete surfaces in places where the aggregate and matrix lacked cohesion. Severe erosion of the panel surfaces in isolated locations exposed the embedded wire reinforcement, which exhibited corrosion.

LABORATORY AND FIELD TESTING

The concrete and dalle-de-verre restoration demanded thorough testing of existing materials and careful review of proposed treatments. The restoration design aimed to slow the rate of rebar corrosion while also developing a patching system to match the color and texture of the existing weathered concrete.



Figure 3. Coffered-side of freestanding wall. Shallowly embedded, corroded steel reinforcing bar exposed by spalling concrete and previous patches.

Laboratory testing, including accelerated weathering tests and rate of absorption tests, compared the effectiveness of different proposed coating combinations. A visual assessment determined the selected coatings did not affect the color of the concrete. Conductivity tests, X-ray Diffraction, and X-ray Fluorescence confirmed the selected cleaner and coatings did not produce any salts in the panels that would contribute to future deterioration.

A two-year period of field testing included using electrodes embedded in the façade to monitor the effects of a combination of treatments on steel embedded in concrete patching material. This testing also evaluated the impact of coatings applied to sections of sound, original concrete. It indicated that the surface coatings decreased the rate of water absorption into the concrete and the corrosion rate of embedded steel.

A series of field mock-ups was also conducted to compare the appearance and performance of available patching options. Criteria considered while selecting a repair mortar included: durability; low shrinkage upon set; color fastness; adequate strength for deep patches; manufacturer's technical support; familiarity to restoration trades; and compatibility with the selected rebar and concrete coatings.

Finally, additional tests were performed to evaluate a variety of epoxy, lime-based, and cementitious injection materials for the repair of through-panel cracks, which ranged in size from 0.3 millimeter to over one millimeter. In response to the various product limitations and site conditions, routing and filling cracks using a custom color patching mortar proved to be the most viable option for repairing the variety of crack widths present at the building.

EXTERIOR RESTORATION

The facade restoration began by cleaning the façade of bird matter, biological growth, and general atmospheric soil. Over 3,000 cast-in-place concrete patches were installed during the course of the restoration, using five custom colors to match the original concrete pours. An aggregate blend of local sands applied to the patch surfaces matched them to the color and texture of the aged concrete (Fig. 4).¹⁰



Figure 4. Aggregate was applied to the surfaces of the concrete patches to match the color and texture of the adjacent aged concrete.



Figure 5. Crack in dalle-de-verre panel routed with diamond tipped dremel blade in preparation for patch installation.



Figure 6. Epoxy replacement panels prepared for installation. The sand broadcast onto the surface of the epoxy creates a finish similar to the original concrete matrix.

The contractor repaired approximately 4,000 cracks by routing them with custom manufactured, diamond tipped dremel blades and filling them with repair mortar (Fig. 5).¹¹ Although the original panels at the Great Hall were cast from a pre-packaged concrete mix, they exhibit a wide variation in colors. For efficiency, the contractor used only two colors of patching mortar, a gray and a tan. At eye level, an aggregate blend affixed to the panels with consolidant further blended the patches with the adjacent concrete.

The original panel manufacturer, now called Willet Hauser Architectural Glass, provided new epoxy panels to replace the concrete panels that were beyond repair. Panels were fabricated to simulate the appearance of the original concrete panels by broadcasting a mix of sand onto their surfaces; natural variations in the aggregate coupled with the use of two colors of epoxy resulted in a range of tan and gray replacement panels (Fig. 6).

After the restoration of the cast-in-place concrete and dalle-de-verre panels, the repair work continued with the application of a migrating corrosion inhibitor to reduce the corrosion rate of steel embedded in sound cast-in-place concrete. Friable, weathered panel surfaces were then stabilized by applying a consolidant. Finally, both the cast-in-place concrete and dalle-de-verre were coated with a water repellent to reduce their rate of water absorbance.

Careful consideration of replacement materials and implementation of conservation treatments based on the laboratory and on-site testing enabled retention of the majority of the original handcrafted dalle de verre as well as the preservation of the unique visual effect created by this extraordinary mid-century World's Fair building. The building

once again stands as an architectural achievement nearly sculptural in appearance. Although the fair exhibits were removed long ago, the interior space, with its thousands of dalle-de-verre panels set into the massive undulating concrete grid of the Great Hall, continues to awe museum visitors as they experience a building that is unique even among world's fair buildings.

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All images courtesy of Building Conservation Associates, Inc.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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OPERATIONS & URBAN PLANNING PAVILION

SECTION 5



5.1.

Panorama: Robert Moses' Modern City and the New York World's Fairs

Magdalena Sabat

URBANISM AT THE NEW YORK WORLD'S FAIRS

The New York World's Fairs of 1939-40 and 1964-65 were theme parks by our contemporary understanding of the term, but also much more. Edgar Lawrence Doctorow and Robert Rydell, among others, have written on the world's fair phenomenon as a structuring metaphor for twentieth-century American culture. The fairs in New York City, Chicago, and other urban centers, displayed the future as imagined in terms of grand changes to transportation, communication, and living standards.¹ While the fairs were highly commercial spaces where powerful companies could impress the public with new products like washing machines and automobiles, artifacts like the New York City Panorama show that the fairs were also structured to engage large-scale social and urban issues.

The New York Fairs were products of their political times. In the context of the Depression and World War II, later urban exodus, and the Cold War, early- to mid-twentieth-century New York City officials sought to correct what they saw as a climate of directionless urbanism. Following World War II, city dwellers flocked to the suburbs, as cities were thought to be centers of crime with slums and unhealthy living conditions. Beginning in 1924 and continuing through the 1960s, New York City Park Commissioner Robert Moses pursued his quest to modernize and clean up New York City with highways and public works projects. He hoped to revitalize the city with parks and pools in the context of the trend of suburbanization, and to create a road network connecting the metropolis and the suburbs: "It has long been a cherished ambition of mine to weave together the loose strands and frayed edges of New York's metropolitan arterial tapestry," said Moses.² For the Park Commissioner, the 1939-40 and the 1964-65 New York World's Fairs were opportunities to promote the metropolis and bring world investors to New York City. Moses believed the city was not obsolete, but a center of business and sociability.³ Thus, not by coincidence, several prominent exhibits during the 1939-40 and 1964-65 New York World Fairs focused on city planning. The Panorama was an urban and social planning tool created by Moses in hard economic times to showcase his public works achievements and demonstrate the city's potential for future growth through a road and highway network.

MODELS AND MONUMENTS

The Panorama of New York City is a 9,335 square foot, three-dimensional model of New York City that on a one-inch to one hundred-foot scale duplicates the topography of the metropolis (Fig. 1). It was built between 1961 and 1963 for the 1964-65 New York World's Fair, a work of tremendous effort and precision by cartographers, city planners, and scientists. Robert Moses commissioned a team of one hundred Lester Associates Architects and model makers to complete the project with a maximum allowance of one percent error. It was displayed as a feature exhibit at the Fair and accompanied the 1931 Castello Model that shows New Amsterdam in 1660.⁴ The historic model of New Amsterdam welcomed visitors who proceeded to an eight-minute tracked-car ride, with audio commentary, around the perimeter of the Panorama. Marc H. Miller notes that the exhibition produced a contrast between the two models and “demonstrated the city’s growth from a trading post on the tip of Manhattan to a sprawling five-borough metropolis.”⁵ The exhibit blended modeling technology and theme park entertainment, creating a sense of progression and development. The Panorama was presented as a utopia achieved, a theme common to most of the fair exhibits.



Figure 1. A view of the Panorama of New York City from the observation balcony at the Queens Museum of Art.

During Moses’ appointment as Park Commissioner the Panorama was carefully updated to reflect the cityscape. However, with Moses’ retirement, changes in city governance, and budgeting priorities, the Panorama has not kept up with the architectural and structural changes in New York City and today reflects New York of the 1970s.⁶ The Panorama of

New York City is now housed in the Queens Museum of Art in the historic New York City Building, a structure built for the 1939-40 New York World's Fair. The museum, facing the Unisphere, also holds the Watershed model. The latter is a large-scale relief map of the New York City water supply system and the surrounding areas' water irrigation networks, commissioned by Moses for the 1939-40 New York World's Fair. The Unisphere, a 140-foot-high globe of the earth, a monument composed of 990,000 pounds of steel designed by Gilmore Clarke, was built as the symbol for the 1964-65 Fair. It marks the center of Flushing Meadows-Corona Park. Together with the New York State Pavilion, it is one of only two exterior structures remaining of the New York World's Fairs (Fig. 2).



Figure 2. A detail from the Panorama of New York City showing the Flushing Meadows-Corona Park, the Unisphere, the State Pavilion and the New York City Building.

Of these artifacts, the Unisphere and State Pavilion have received the most attention: they have been featured in films and used as promotional landmarks by New York City authorities. Both are remnants of the colossal futuristic monuments that at one time lined the many pavilions of the World's Fairs. The Watershed and Panorama projects have also served as promotional tools for New York City, but their careful and costly construction was not meant solely as a visitor attraction; they were also designed as urban planning tools. Moses frequently used architectural models to plan and promote his public works projects. One of the most demanding and extensive of these efforts, the Panorama, forecast the potential of the city and even featured projects not yet completed or initiated by Moses.⁷ From its conception, the Panorama was planned as a “complete” and “living” model that would be “designed as a comprehensive planning and study device for use after the closing

of the World Fair.”⁸ Moses believed he could use the Panorama during the Fair to illustrate his already completed public works projects and after the Fair to help illustrate and sell his future plans to city officials and the public at large. Thus, unlike the Unisphere and State Pavilion structures, the Watershed and Panorama are archival documents of the structure of the city itself, the technology of the time period, and the planning policies of the post-World War II and Cold War eras.

MODERN PLANNING

During the post-World War II period, the new field of urban planning became dominated by modern concepts. Modernists argued that cities were plagued by chaos and congestion and that they lacked direction in development; in the early years, the planning movement sought to use new technology to decentralize cities.⁹ Le Corbusier’s theories dominated as a framework for planning and cleaning up the city. The choice was ‘Architecture or Revolution,’ social lag or progress by rational design.¹⁰

Interest in urban planning and its connection to urban demography was already visible at the 1939/40 World’s Fair which featured a Demographic Exhibit that used floor maps and mechanically operated models to illustrate contemporary and future census data from around the United States.¹¹ The 1939 Office of Population Research report about the exhibit shows that other country pavilions also featured similar demographic displays; clearly there was an international interest in visually demonstrating the new urban science.¹² Plans for future urban development also constituted the core of feature entertainment-oriented exhibits like Norman Bel Geddes’s Futurama and Henry Dreyfus’ Democracity made for the 1939/40 Fair. The Futurama looked twenty years into the future and imagined the networks of highways connecting suburban America in 1960. Democracity was a diorama that depicted a utopian city of the future with multilevel roads and city blocks. In the context of these earlier pavilions, the Panorama was less entertainment-oriented and in a tangible manner showed the future city as already achieved.

By the 1960s Moses had completed numerous public works projects and miles of highway that earned him the nicknames ‘Master Planner’ and the ‘Baron Haussmann of New York.’ Moses believed connecting the city and suburbs with a network of roads and highways would spark economic development by increasing business activity.¹³ The emphasis of the 1939/40 Fair’s demographic and urban projects was decentralization towards the outskirts of the city and into the emerging suburbs. The construction of the Panorama for the 1964-65 Fair shows Moses’ achievements in bringing modernism back to the interior of the city. In fact the Panorama gives a new idea of “city,” redefining the metropolis as a larger multi-neighborhood entity that includes the suburbs; the city is not an inner core but a giant body connected by a network. Moses was willing to relocate anything that stood in the way of this network. Anthony Flint notes that the roads were called ‘arterials’ in all of Moses’ official city documents.¹⁴ Moses imagined the road network as a life-sustaining mechanism of the city that had to be direct and free-flowing. His vision of order reflected

the modern planning ethos, sacrificing the micro-functions of city life in favor of the unified and fast-moving network.

Paul Mason Fotsch argues that the emphasis on city planning and public works during the World's Fairs was a way to forecast better economic times and create a feeling of social unity through joint ventures.¹⁵ Moses' projects at the World's Fairs support this argument, but they also show the failures of the technological determinism that plagued post-World War II urban planning. Modern planners overlooked the intricacy of city life and its infrastructure, instead creating a systematized and simplified landscape. Leading up to the 1964-65 Fair, Moses' policies and autocratic manner began to be questioned, and his popularity declined dramatically with his plan for a Lower Manhattan Expressway that would displace businesses and local residents throughout that part of the city. Due in part to advocacy by Jane Jacobs, Moses' proposal for the Expressway was rejected by the government in 1964. Moses faced increasing pressure from authorities to explain large investments, in particular those in the 1964-65 Fair, which was ultimately highly unsuccessful in financial terms.

THE GHOSTLY EFFECT

André Jansson and Amanda Lagerkvist use the terms *space of futurity* and *future gaze* to consider the social effects of urban panoramas.¹⁶ The authors claim that a panorama is an abstract space, a spectacle for distanced voyeurism, and an emotive geography, a “symbolic amalgamation of historical myths and collective hope.”¹⁷ The Panorama is a futurity that promises cultural and technological superiority and the coming achievements of urban regeneration; it represents the modernist gaze *par excellence*.¹⁸ For Jansson and Lagerkvist the term “panorama” extends to all mediated portrayals of the city landscape, from paintings and photographs to tourist lookout points that architecturally create viewing situations of the landscape of the metropolis.

As a future-oriented city landscape, the Panorama of New York City is a simulation in Jean Baudrillard's sense of “precession of the model”—it did not become the hyperreal that displaced the actual New York skyline but it affected its development and legitimized the eras' policies in the name of the future metropolis: it helped to determine the location of future housing, routes for future highway construction, sight lines for television and radio transmission, etc.¹⁹ It sought to sell a *new* New York by creating an opportunity for “future gazing” and thus supported the authorities' plan to plant New York City on the world map in a time of crisis and transition.²⁰

The Borough of Queens boasts itself as one of the most ethnically diverse communities in the United States, using the headline ‘Visit Queens and see the World!’²¹ It is an urban amalgamation of busy streets with merchants, squished apartments and restaurants, cars in traffic, streets lined with people—an urban chaos in the modern sense. Adjacent, the Flushing Meadows-Corona Park, the former Fairs site, still exemplifies modern vistas, wide-open spaces and a decentralized human presence. The Panorama and park together attest

to the period of social experimentation that believed all aspects of human life could be made better by technology and organization. Utopia through charting has not come about; today, density in the city center is desirable.

At the viewing room in the Queens Museum of Art, the whole of New York City can be seen from above, yet unlike the bustling “city that never sleeps,” this landscape is a static one. As a material remainder of the past, the Panorama is like the Paris Arcades which Walter Benjamin wrote about during the 1930s.²² Because the Panorama maintains an aura of times and an ideology different from our own, it is an uncanny sight with a ghostly presence. Whether the model is seen at a glance across the wide map-model terrain or in a focus on the obsessively intricate mini-structure buildings, its emotive function is one of emptiness and stillness rather than urban achievement. This Panorama lacks the hustle and bustle, the human energy, of the metropolis. The spectacle that once was is now an archeological terrain displaying past ideology.

For Benjamin, aging structures represented a dialectical relationship between newness and the primary old. Unlike modern urban planners, Benjamin saw revolutionary energies in the outdated that failed to provide the unreachable collective fantasy.²³ Susan Buck-Morss notes, “Benjamin viewed the world of industrial objects as fossils, as the trace of living history that can be read from the surfaces of surviving objects.”²⁴ Benjamin understood time as always haunted by the repressed personal and collective ghosts of the past, which come into view only when initiated by an experience in the present. The Panorama of New York City is no longer a planning tool: it has been replaced by newer technologies. Today the Panorama is most frequently viewed by school children and not by the expert planners for whom it was primarily intended. The Panorama speaks to ongoing problems facing the city and to design practice that limits and tightly structures human interaction and mobility. The revolutionary aspect of the Panorama today is its ability to show that ordering captures only one dimension crucial to the growth and well-being of the metropolis. The Panorama’s ghostly power lies in its emotive capacity to show the incompleteness of structure without human presence.

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³Ibid., 70.

⁴The 1931 model made by Charles S. Capehart that shows New Amsterdam of 1660 is also called the Castello Model after the original 1660 plan of the Lower Manhattan settlement. The model is on display at the Museum of the City of New York. For more information, see Marc H. Miller, *The Panorama of New York City* (New York: The Queens Museum, 1990), 15-17.

⁵Miller, *The Panorama of New York City*, 16.

⁶Notably, the Queens Museum of Art does periodically raise funds to update the Panorama. Through fundraisers the Museum has been able to build and insert some of New York's important contemporary structures into the model.

⁷Miller, *The Panorama of New York City*, 30-31.

⁸Excerpt from the July 1961 construction contract for the Panorama, quoted in Marc H. Miller, *The Panorama of New York City*, quoted in *ibid.*, 36.

⁹Mark S. Foster, *From Streetcar to Superhighway: American City Planners and Urban Transportation, 1900-1940* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1981).

¹⁰Le Corbusier, *Towards a New Architecture*, translated by Fredrick Etchells (Oxford, UK: The Architectural Press/Reed Educational and Professional Publishing, 1985).

¹¹See Office of Population Research, "Demographic Exhibit at New York's World's Fair," *Population Index* 5 no.3 (1939): 151.

¹²*Ibid.*, 151.

¹³Flint, *Wrestling with Moses: How Jane Jacobs Took on New York's Master Builder and Transformed the American City*, 145.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, 141.

¹⁵Paul M. Fotsch. "The Building of a Superhighway Future at the New York World's Fair," *Cultural Critique* 48 (2001): 65-97. Fotsch references Gilbert Seldes, *Your World of Tomorrow* (New York: Rogers-Kellog-Stillson, 1939) and Joseph P. Cusker and Helen Harrison, *Dawn of a New Day: The New York World's Fair, 1939/40* (New York: New York University Press, 1980).

¹⁶André Jansson and Amanda Lagerkvist, "The Future Gaze: City Panoramas as Politico-emotive Geographies," *Journal of Visual Culture* 8 (2009): 26.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, 27. Jansson and Lagerkvist draw on Richard R. Wohl and Anselm L. Strauss, "Symbolic Representation of the Urban Milieu," *American Journal of Sociology* 65/3 (1958): 523-32; Kevin Lynch, *The Image of the City* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1960); Nigel Thrift, "Intensities of Feeling: Toward a Spatial Politics of Affect," *Geografiska Annaler* 86B/1 (2004): 57-78; and Yi-Fu Tuan, *Topophilia: A Study of Environmental Perception, Attitudes, and Values* (New York: Morningside/Columbia University Press, 1974).

¹⁸Jansson and Lagerkvist, "The Future Gaze: City Panoramas as Politico-emotive Geographies," 27.

¹⁹Jean Baudrillard, *Simulations* ([New York:] Semiotext(e), 1983), 32.

²⁰Miller, *The Panorama of New York City*, 39.

²¹See the Queens Borough website: <http://www.queensbp.org/>.

²²See Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, edited by Rolf Tiedemann and Howard Eiland, translated by Kevin McLaughlin (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2002).

²³Walter Benjamin, "Surrealism, the Last Snapshot of the European Intelligentsia," in *Walter Benjamin, Selected Writings, Vol.2, Part 1, 1927-1930*, edited by Michael W. Jennings (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1999), 255-56.

²⁴Susan Buck-Morss, *The Dialectics of Seeing: Walter Benjamin and the Arcades Project* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1989), 56.

IMAGE CREDITS

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5.2.

The Pass of the Chair Maker: Identity & Visibility at Philadelphia's International Exhibition, 1876

Kate LaPrad

Early in 1876, chair maker and entrepreneur Elder Robert M. Wagan (1833-1883) of the Mount Lebanon, New York Shaker community received his exhibitor's pass to Philadelphia's International Exhibition of 1876. Shortly after that, Wagan individualized his pass by affixing an albumen print of his face. No larger than an oversized index card and designed to be folded in half to be easily carried, the pass permitted Wagan to enter the fairgrounds once per day without paying admission. It not only allowed him to attend to his business of marketing Shaker chairs at the Exhibition, it also identified him as part of a carefully crafted admissions policy that drew on the latest technology in lithography and photography to control visitation, prevent fraud, and generate accurate visitation statistics.

The International Exhibition welcomed visitors for the 159 days between May 10 and November 11, 1876. Nearly ten million people—almost one-sixth of the country's population—passed through one of the fair's 106 entrance gates, making the International Exhibition of 1876 the most visited fair in American history relative to the nation's population.¹ On the Exhibition's busiest day, Pennsylvania Day, held on September 28, 274,919 people were admitted. On Thursday, October 19, Gate 45 saw 1,870 people pass through within a single hour.² The Exhibition's 31,000 exhibitors made up a small but significant portion of these admissions each day, as they arrived to sell their wares, demonstrate trades, and increase the visibility of their industries. In some cases, the experiences of these exhibitors are known to history only through the admission passes they left behind. In its survival and design, Robert Wagan's ticket, taken individually, speaks to his need to make repeated journeys from central New York to centennial Philadelphia. As one of thousands of photograph tickets distributed, however, it reflects the immense scale of the Exhibition and the strict regulations imposed by the Centennial Commission and its officials.

THE PASS & THE ARTISAN

The photograph ticket was the brainchild of David Yates, General Manager of the Department of Admissions. The 285-acre fairgrounds in Philadelphia's Fairmount Park were surrounded by 16,000 feet of fence interrupted by entrance gates, 106 for people and 17 for wagons, as well as 41 exit gates. At each gate, mahogany and ash turnstiles fitted

with reinforced moneyboxes and counters functioned much like modern cash registers. The locked boxes, secured from both unscrupulous “stile-keepers” and wily visitors, held the fifty-cent pieces or one-time passes that allowed admission, while the counters tracked the number of times the turnstile revolved. Any stile-keeper whose counter and money register did not agree was subject to reprimand. This system worked well for visitors in Class A (regular visitors paying for a daily admission) and Class B (complimentary pass holders).³

For the exhibitors and workmen in Class C, however, the system differed. These groups came to the Exhibition regularly, so issuing daily passes would have been time-consuming and costly. Instead, after applying for and receiving permission from the Director-General, exhibitors were issued “the photograph ticket” (Fig. 1). First, blank tickets were lithographed by the Philadelphia Bank Note Company, on heavy, machine-made paper. The outside was “leather” colored, while the inside was yellow.



Figure 1. Photograph Ticket to International Exhibition for Robert M. Wagan (Outside). Philadelphia, PA: 1876. SA 1036.

Although Wagan’s pass is now in two pieces, the ticket was originally folded in half, indicated by the matching torn edges of the two halves. Viewed as a book, the front cover listed an exhibitor’s name, country of origin, and role in the exhibition. As inscribed, this pass belonged to Mr. R.M. Wagan, an American exhibitor in Class 5432. The front of each pass also bore the stamped signature of David Yates and a red number. The number allowed lost or stolen passes to be placed on the “stop-list” until found, although the back of the pass clearly warns, “No duplicate issued if lost.” The number also provided a tracking system. If passes were distributed in numerical order, Wagan’s was 19,730, which fell near the middle of the 33,887 photograph tickets distributed.⁴

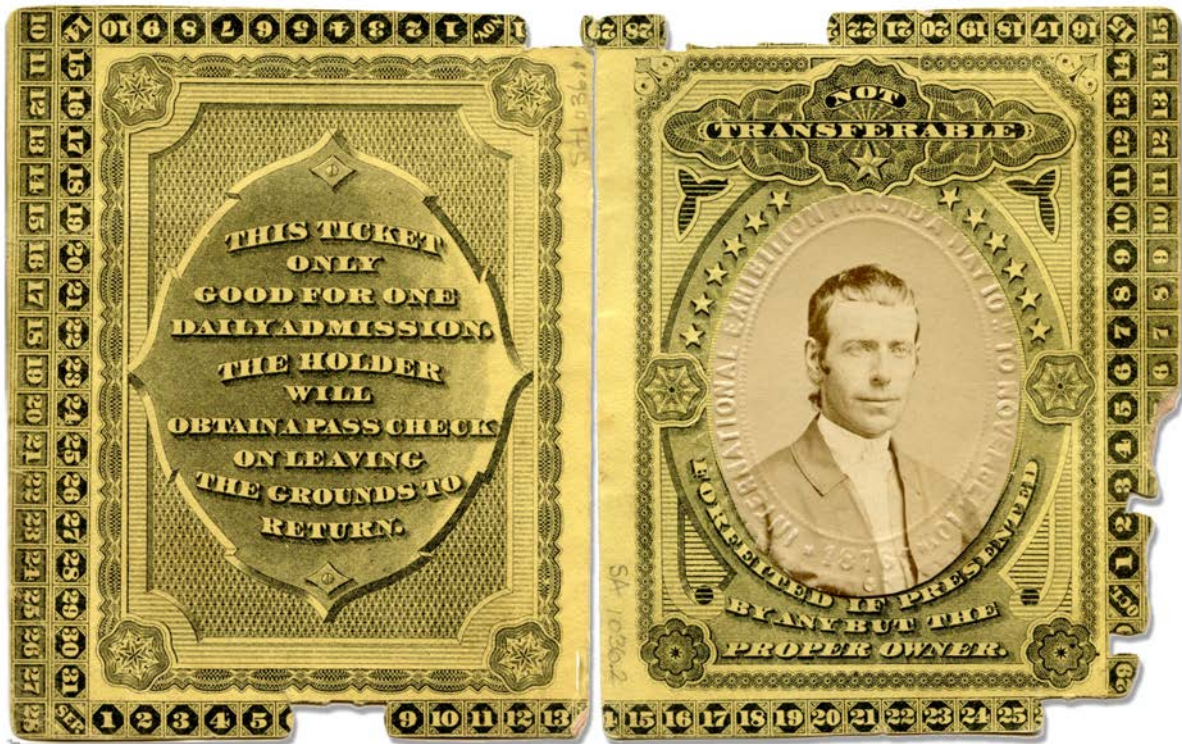


Figure 2. Photograph Ticket to International Exhibition for Robert M. Wagan (Inside). Philadelphia, PA: 1876. SA 1036.

The ticket's interior (Fig. 2) contains an albumen print of a middle-aged man in a simple coat and high-collared shirt looking slightly to his left. Wagan was forty-three years old at the time of the Exhibition. The photograph is attached to the yellow card inside a ring of stars and two banners, which read "Not transferable" at the top, and "Forfeited if presented by any but the proper owner" at the bottom. Around the outside of the oval photograph, the words "International Exhibition Philada May 10th to November 10th* 1876*" are embossed. The official emboss was the final step in validating the ticket.⁵ The swirling ornamentation and intricate crosshatching created a dynamic decorative motif that also served to impede counterfeiting. In every design decision, Yates insisted on integrity from both his employees and his patrons while also striving to maximize the Exhibition's profits and discourage fraud.⁶

Because paying visitors and complimentary pass holders had coins or passes to drop into the registers and exhibitors did not, exhibitors used different gates. At an exhibitor gate, Wagan and his colleagues produced their photograph tickets and the stile-keeper was ordered to compare the photograph with the person standing before him. If satisfied, the official would use a "self-registering punch" to perforate the square around the outside of the pass that contained that day's date (Fig. 2). The pass allowed one entrance per day. To exit and re-enter, exhibitors had to request a return pass check. The pass check gave its holder something to put into the registers to equalize the counter on the turnstile. The return passes were dated and changed color daily to prevent fraud.

The distinctive, curvilinear marks of the register punch on the pass suggest that Wagan was admitted to the Exhibition on the first days of July, September 6–8, 26–28 and 30, and October 23–27 and 30–31. Much of the pass for May through August is missing, but the interior paper edges for those dates are severed so cleanly that those parts were likely removed completely to reach dates below. Still, however, the many dates remaining on the pass indicate that Wagan must have had associates at the Exhibition. A journal from the Mt. Lebanon community confirms this. On April 7, “the Centennial things [were taken] to the Depot.” On April 10, “Robert and Ora Wright went to Philadelphia to set up the Centennial things. Staid 4 days.”⁷

The International Exhibition came at a critical point for the Shaker chair industry, providing visibility and much-needed brand recognition. In the decade before the Exhibition, chair making at the Mount Lebanon Shaker community accelerated markedly. Catalogues shifted from describing furniture styles in words to describing them by numbers and letters, as the operation struggled to pace output to demand. With popularity came imitation. Advertisements therefore reminded readers that only chairs with the gold transfer trademark were Shaker and “none others are genuine.”⁸ It seems likely that Wagan thought an exhibit at the International Exhibition, with its focus on both the history and future of American manufacturing, would increase the visibility of the famous Shaker industry. Although not within the date range of his pass, on April 29 Wagan himself went to Philadelphia to “set his chairs right.”⁹ Traditional American craftsmanship would be on stage, and this was too important a mission to be left to chance.

“GLORIFYING EVEN THE DRUDGERIES OF OUR WORK”:

DAVID YATES & THE DEPARTMENT OF ADMISSIONS

In fact, nothing at all at the International Exhibition was left to chance. From the beginning, the Centennial Commission sought to “exhibit the past in contrast with the present; to take measure of the growth of a free nation from three to forty millions, in the most wonderful century of our nation’s history [...] and to glorify even the drudgeries of our work by reflecting upon both its beauties and its uses.”¹⁰ This “work” extended from Wagan’s chairs to the administration of the entire fair. In its rigid administrative hierarchy, unprecedented admissions policies and effective crowd control measures, the Centennial Commission expressed its desires to limit financial losses and, in the process, secure both the physical and symbolic premises of the fair. Devised by prominent men who had gained valuable experience as military administrators in the American Civil War or as metropolitan business leaders in an industrializing age, these organizational ideas shaped some of the most regulated and efficient systems the world had yet seen.

From its inception, the International Exhibition was organized like emerging businesses in the corporate world, with stockholders presiding over a board and executive committee that, in turn, oversaw the department managers. The Director-General, according to

his own report to the Executive Committee, took responsibility for encouraging foreign participation, recruiting exhibitors and overseeing managers of departments ranging from Installation and Awards to Sanitation and Admissions.¹¹ These managers' biographies suggest that they were chosen based on their previous business and military successes. Director-General A.T. Goshorn, who spent the three years before the Exhibition living in Philadelphia, had been the owner of a large white-lead business in Cincinnati, Ohio. He was a member of the executive committee for Cincinnati's International Exhibition in 1871 and had visited Vienna in 1873 during the Austrian International Exhibition. General Joseph R. Hawley, President of the Centennial Commission, rose from the rank of Captain to Major-General of Volunteers in the American Civil War, while the Exhibition's architect, H.J. Schwarzmann, had attended Munich Military Academy before serving in the Bavarian army. Most of Director-General Goshorn's managers were relatively young men who had served in the Civil War. Whether or not their administrative experience in wartime affected the outcome, the International Exhibition of 1876 was one of the few exhibitions in history to open with every major building ready. The Commissioners could run a government in wartime, and they could organize an international exhibition in peacetime.¹²

David G. Yates was not yet forty-one when he became the General Manager of the Department of Admissions. A Philadelphian by birth and portrait painter by training, Yates became an engraver in New York. At the outbreak of the Civil War, he joined the pay department of the United States Treasury, but stayed only two years, at which time he returned to Philadelphia to continue engraving. By 1876, therefore, he must have been familiar with the lithographic process that the Philadelphia Bank Note Company used to mass-produce the various passes he designed.¹³

As manager of the Department of Admissions, Yates was charged with the development of the Exhibition's admission structure. Yates wanted to ensure that neither guests nor employees subverted the system. In his final report, he wrote

The most important labor of this Department was the maturing of a plan of admissions that would successfully protect the revenues of the Exhibition alike from the efforts of the most ingenious and skilled talent, which, from the generally believed magnitude of the enterprise, would be likely to engage in schemes to imitate or counterfeit whatever ticket of admission might be adopted, and at the same time secure absolute protection from wrong-doing by any of the men employed to execute the plan.¹⁴

This two-part goal could be achieved only through the standardization and universal application of admission rates, the use of individualized passes that established a user's identity within the structure of the Exhibition, and the development of a multi-check admission system that prevented fraud and produced accurate statistics.

Not only did Yates need to protect revenues, he also needed to defend his rights to charge admission by designing an admission system that privileged no one. According to the Doctrine of Adverse Possession, his policies had to be applied fairly to ensure that the Exhibition retained its right to charge. Free admissions, therefore, made up less than one percent of the total. After the Exhibition, Yates proudly directed the Executive Committee to a table “showing the small percentage which complimentary free admissions bear in the total number.” Unlike at previous fairs, admission rates were constant at \$.50 per person, no matter the day or time. (This remained true except on Saturdays in August when, much to Yates’ perturbation, the Commission halved admission.) For general visitors, designing and printing paper tickets was an “unnecessary expense.” Yates wrote in hindsight, “no wiser regulation was made than that which declared the fifty-cent note [...] the ticket of admission.” He went on to extol the note’s advantages: the elimination of external, possibly dishonest ticketing agents and the difficulty of counterfeiting it. His department did design a “handsomely engraved package ticket” for patrons to give as gifts, but he considered these a waste of time and resources that “needlessly disturbed the system which had grown up around the piece of money as the ticket of admission.”¹⁵ The desire to control all ticketing went further. Yates was reluctant to allow visitors arriving by rail to receive their admissions from the railroads, as had been common at previous fairs; he required that each railroad company send samples of the ticket it planned to distribute to both his department and the Centennial National Bank for authorization.¹⁶

In addition to the ten million general visitors, the constant stream of exhibitors, workmen, deliverymen, members of the press, and international dignitaries—each with differing schedules—challenged the Department of Admissions to create individualized passes to accommodate people in each group. As historian Jane Caplan and sociologist John Torpey point out, the creation (or imposition) of identity and the method of its documentation are distinct.¹⁷ Yates’ work illustrates this. These men already had social identities; Yates needed instead to devise a method of identifying a large and ever-changing constituency of visitors to establish an Exhibition-specific system of control.

As a visual artist himself, Yates must have been familiar with the photographic processes that could be used to validate the multiuse passes and make them virtually impossible to transfer to another person. The area on the pass covered by Wagan’s photograph (Fig. 2) reads, “Not good after June 1st unless the Regulation Photograph of Proper Holder is inserted in this space.”¹⁸ In Vienna in 1873, a signature had to provide the same legitimacy, and Prince Albert’s signature validated his season ticket to the Crystal Palace Exhibition of 1851.¹⁹ A photograph, however, provided greater security against abuse.

Because Yates seems to have mastered the admission of repeat users with the exhibitor’s photograph ticket, the absence of a season pass for general visitors is mysterious. Season passes had figured prominently at previous fairs. If visitors had merely showed a season pass to gain admission, however, Yates would have had no way to determine how many

people were on the grounds at any one time. If they did not place something (a coin or return pass) into the register as they turned the turnstile, Yates could not balance the register against the stile and thus ensure the honesty of his stile-keepers. The lack of multiuse passes for visitors in Philadelphia, it seems, reveals a desire to know how many visitors were in attendance at all times and to account precisely for the admission money they had paid. Even the Commissioners for the Exposition in Cincinnati in 1879, who had read Yates' report of 1876, insisted on the usefulness of the coin admission, "so that a tally can be kept between the recording turnstile and the pieces of money."²⁰ And statistics were very important to Yates. He kept daily numbers of paid and complimentary admissions, the visitor capacity and temperature of the Main Building at several times each day, and the numbers and origins of all visiting schoolchildren.²¹ In fact, an impressionable *New York Times* correspondent devoted nearly two full columns to an exposition of the Exhibition's admissions system in October 1876, praising the "ingenious character" of the turnstiles and the "excellent management" of Yates who "has devoted himself to this particular branch of service." The accounting was so efficient, he claimed, that when he called the admissions office at 1:40 p.m., Yates's employees could tell him precisely the Exhibition's cash receipts as of 1 p.m. Even the Romans at their gladiatorial contests, he gushed, could have benefited from Yates' emphasis on efficiency, integrity, and control.²²

From its inception, the Centennial Exhibition sought to "exhibit the past in contrast with the present." Not only was this articulated in the technology and innovation of its exhibitors, it was also reflected in the Exhibition's administration. While Wagan invested time and money to exhibit his "genuine" Shaker chairs to a public eager to reminisce about America's past through the lens of its traditional crafts and customs, Yates harnessed the relatively new techniques of lithography and photography to prevent fraud, control visitation, and maintain accurate statistics. Were his passes a success? During the Exhibition, the Centennial Guard made 675 arrests, 160 of which involved larceny and 72 intoxication. Only six people, however, were arrested for "attempting to obtain admission to grounds under false pretences"²³ and only one was apprehended for "Receiving or Selling passes under false pretences." Perhaps, then, Yates was successful. His passes created the foundation of a rigid system of security and control that defined both the visitor and exhibitor experience at Philadelphia's International Exhibition of 1876.

¹John Maass, *The Glorious Enterprise: The Centennial Exhibition of 1876 and H.J. Schwarzmann, Architect-in-Chief* (Watkins Glen, NY: American Life Foundation for the Institute for the Study of Universal History Through Arts & Artifacts, 1973), 129-30.

²David Yates, "Report of the General Manager of the Department of Admissions," in *Report of the Director-General, Including the Reports of Bureaus of Administration*, Vol. 1 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1880), 439.

³*Ibid.*, 431-459.

⁴For information on the photograph ticket, see *ibid.*, 435. On recovering lost or stolen passes and the “stop-list,” see *ibid.*, 437.

⁵*Ibid.*, 435-6.

⁶*Ibid.*, 435-6.

⁷In Charles R. Muller and Timothy D. Reiman, *The Shaker Chair* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1984), 178.

⁸See, for example, Advertisement, *Harper's Weekly*, 22 May 1875. For catalogue descriptions, see *Illustrated Catalogue and Price List of Shakers' Chairs Manufactured by the Society of Shakers, R.M. Wagan & Co.* (Mt. Lebanon, NY: Canaan Printing Co., c.1880), ASC430, The Edward Deming Andrews Memorial Shaker Collection, Winterthur Library, Winterthur, Delaware.

⁹Muller and Reiman, *The Shaker Chair*, 178.

¹⁰Centennial Commission, *Journal of the Proceedings of the United States Centennial Commission at Philadelphia, 1872* (Philadelphia: E.C. Markley & Son, Printers, 1872), 44.

¹¹A.T. Goshorn, “Report of the Director-General,” in *Report of the Director-General, Including Reports of Bureaus of Administration*, Vol. 1 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1880), 4-5.

¹²John Maass makes a similar point in “The Centennial Success Story,” in *1876: A Centennial Exhibition*, ed. Robert Post (Washington, D.C.: National Museum of History and Technology, 1976), 13.

¹³Biographies of general managers are found in J.S. Ingram, *The Centennial Exposition, Described and Illustrated, Being a Concise and Graphic Description of this Grand Enterprise, Commemorative of the First Centenary of American Independence* (Philadelphia: Hubbard Bros., 1876), 734-747. For Yates, see Ingram, 747.

¹⁴David Yates, “Report of the General Manager of the Department of Admissions,” in *Report of the Director-General, Including the Reports of Bureaus of Administration*, Vol. 1 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1880), 433.

¹⁵Yates, “Report of the General Manager,” 441 and 488.

¹⁶For railroad correspondence, see Scrapbook 1, A606.P53293 v. 1, Print & Picture Collection, Philadelphia Free Library, Philadelphia, PA.

¹⁷Jane Caplan and John Torpey, *Documenting Individual Identity: The Development of State Practices in the Modern World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 3.

¹⁸See Yates, “Report of the General Manager,” 545 for the photograph ticket prototype.

¹⁹See Robert H. Thurston, ed. *Reports of the Commissioners of the United States to the International Exhibition Held at Vienna, 1873*, Vol. 1 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1876), 77: “Season-tickets are not transferable, and each can be used only by the person who signed it.” On the Crystal Palace, see C.H. Gibbs-Smith, *The Great Exhibition of 1851: A Commemorative Album* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1950), 139.

²⁰“Exposition Commissioners: Additional Subscriptions to the Guarantee Fund—Report on the Recording Turnstile and System,” *Cincinnati Daily Gazette*, 17 April 1879, 3.

²¹Yates, “Report of the General Manager,” 488-538.

²²B.P., “Centennial Cash. The Halves and Quarters of the Show.” *The New York Times*, 22 October 1876.

²³W.A. Hoyt, "Department of Protection," in *Report of the Director-General, Including the Reports of Bureaus of Administration*, Vol. 1 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1880), 687-88.

IMAGE CREDITS

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5.3.

Aucune Usine au Monde: Dreaming Work in the Exposition Universelle, Paris 1878

Lawrence Bird

It can be argued that each of the world's fairs should be understood as a dream: a dream of the future, if one seen through the realities and conflicts of its own time. One such dream was the Paris World Exhibition of 1878, through one of its architectural artifacts: the Palais du Champ de Mars. The analysis of this building will draw on two key resources, each presenting its own interpretation of dream and fantasy. The first of these is Karl Marx. Marx saw history as moving mechanistically toward an end: the reconciliation and synthesis of social contradictions into the socialist utopia. His understanding was profoundly materialistic; it valued the concrete and the rational and acknowledged the irrational, the mystical only as a veil over reality, a veil serving an ideological purpose. Nevertheless, as we shall see, he offered a compelling assessment of desire as embodied in the commodity; evidence of a sensibility open to fantasy perhaps unsurprising in an imaginer of utopias. The second resource will be Sigmund Freud. In opposition to Marx, Freud saw the material world—the world of behavior, consciousness, man's everyday works—as a veil over the truth spoken by fantasy. Walter Benjamin was eventually to bring these two seemingly contradictory worlds together, making the dream a legitimate means of seeing a historical materialist truth. For Benjamin the dream image could represent utopia to the present and, as in Michelet's words, each epoch could dream its successor. In the following pages I will consider, through Marx and Freud, to what extent the Palais du Champ de Mars might be understood to embody a nightmare and ask what form of succession is really dreamt here.



Figure 1. Panoramic view of the World Exhibition, 1878. *Vue panoramique de l'exposition universelle de 1878*, engraving by F. Méaule and Karl Fichot, in Adolphe Bitard, *L'exposition de Paris (1878)* (Paris: Librairie illustrée; Librairie M. Dreyfous, 1878).

The aerial perspective reproduced in Fig. 1 convincingly presents the buildings of the Paris World Exhibition of 1878 as a kind of fairground, bustling with activity, ornamented by flights of architectural fantasy. The largest building of this fair was the exquisitely crafted, if immense, jewelcase of the Palais du Champ de Mars: the broad building to the right of the Seine in this image. Visitors entered the Palais through one of two immense steel and glass vestibules at the ends of the building. The “most direct and picturesque route”¹ into the exhibitions was the approach from the Seine through the northernmost entrance: the grand Vestibule d’Iéna. Visitors entering this vestibule would continue on into the long axis of the building, a central street open to the sky. To one side of this open-air enclave (the east) were placed exhibits of French goods, and to the other side exhibits of foreign products. The street itself was occupied by pavilions displaying fine arts; running the full length of one side was the Rue des Nations (“street of nations”), a streetscape composed of architectural facades from around the world (Fig. 2). At the exact center of the central enclave stood the Pavilion of the City of Paris.



Figure 2. Rue des nations, dans le Palais du Champ-de-Mars, vue générale prise près de la façade Portugaise, d’après une photographie de M. Pierre Petit, 1879, engraving by Trichon, in Simon de Vandière, *l’Exposition universelle de 1878 illustrée* (Paris: Calmann Lévy, 1879).

The galleries of the Palais were arrayed to either side of this central street and parallel with it; many of them presented products from the countries on display in the Rue des Nations. The galleries showed a clear gradation from the finest, most delicate and decorative works (musical instruments, perfumes, cutlery, clocks, porcelain, jewelry) adjacent to the interior street, to the most industrial (chemicals, hunting products, tools for cultivating, mines, metallurgy) towards the edges of the Palais. The galleries furthest outward on the route

from the Rue des Nations were the Galeries des Machines, one running along each flank of the Palais. In these immense halls working machines of all kinds were arrayed.

Thus the building's most distinctive façade—the central street including the Rue des Nations and the Pavilion de Paris—is strangely internalized, folded inwards toward its center. The picture is further complicated if we examine a different facet of the Palais. To do so we must walk back out of the building and approach it again from another direction: as though through the back door.

The entire Champ de Mars site, including the Palais, was bounded on its outer face by a 10-foot wooden wall. This fence, long and high but without a trace of monumentality, effectively cut the exhibition off from the city (Fig. 3). It enclosed a row of annexes containing cars, farming equipment, and other displays of machinery, expressed architecturally as large sheds. These annexes stood within the fence but outside the Palais proper, arrayed parallel with and alongside the immense industrial halls of the Galeries des Machines. Between the annexes and the galleries, on either flank of the Palais, was a slit of space echoing the orientation and function of the central street: open to the sky, and occupied by a number of relatively small outbuildings.



Figure 3. Panoramic view of Palais du Champ du Mars, detail. Detail of *Vue panoramique de l'exposition universelle de 1878*, in Bitard, *l'Exposition de Paris (1878)*.

These outbuildings, because of their small size, are not at first obvious in plans of the building. One might even refer to them as visually repressed; in many images they do not figure at all. They only become apparent in certain aerial perspective drawings of the site. When they are visible, we can see eight chimneys, four on each side of the main building, each approximately 35 meters high. These are labeled in plan as *forces motrices*: they provided the power for the hundreds of machines on display in the galleries and annexes; their most important role was to power the machinery in the Galeries des Machines.

While the rows of *forces motrices* were nearly invisible in many respects – hidden in many drawings, and exterior to the main part of the Palais—the experience of this slit of space and the steam engines which occupied it would have been remarkable. This was the back-stage of the fairground. We know that

these immense chimneys belched smoke, that the steam engines feeding them provided up to 1700 horsepower of force to the exhibits inside. We can imagine the heat thrown off into the space by their furnaces, the taste of metal and ashes in the air. This was a space that vibrated with generative power. Most surprisingly, the plans reveal that in the same space and juxtaposed with the forces motrices buildings were numerous drinking and eating establishments: *dégustation des vins, eaux minérales, restaurant Belge*. So visitors who had wandered through the exhibit, past products from distant lands and mechanical wonders on display inside the elaborate, vast, and decorated architectural space of the Palais, would emerge—stumbling out almost accidentally—into the annex area. Almost at the foot of these smokestacks, which towered above the eaves of the immense building, they would drink wine, beer and mineral waters to cool off from the heat of the engines, from their journey through the exhibition rooms, and from the overhead sun. This experience would have added immeasurably to the intensity of the experience of the place, and the impression made by the engines and the towers that provided the building's generative power. If the Rue des Nations can be seen as in some sense the building's face, then the annex slit can be understood as its belly: its source of energy, its site of noisy and violent digestion. Strung as it is along the periphery of the building, just inside the bland wood wall that skirted the Palais, in parallel with but with distant from the central Rue des Nations, it completes the picture of a building, or body, turned inside out.

The strangeness of this enigmatic figure suggests our first interpretation of this assemblage: as a dream structure. This understanding is borne out if we look at it in terms from Sigmund Freud, the great observer of nineteenth-century psychology. For Freud, dreams by their very nature turn things back to front. They do this in order both to articulate and disguise our unspoken desires. Freud terms the process by which desires are translated into the symbols and events of dreams as *dreamwork*, which is carried out by several specific mechanisms. One of these is *condensation*, the combination of contradictory dream thoughts in single elements or composite figures.² A second is *displacement*: the shifting of meaning from the apparent center of the dream. As the real subject of the dream is obscured, its meaning dissimulated, its psychic weight is displaced to indistinct or apparently trivial dream elements. These are imbued with a seemingly disproportionate vividness.³ *Pictorial arrangement* refers to the spatial plotting of meaning in the fabric of the dream, usually through juxtaposition and adjacency. Through it a spatial relation replaces the logical relations present in the dream-thoughts⁴. *Interpretive revision* refers to an attempt to make the dream intelligible while at the same time palatable, without revealing the repressed desire at its heart. The result is the creation of a "façade" for the dream, which does not, however, reveal its full meaning.⁵ As Freud puts it, "with its rags and tatters it stops up the breaches in the structure of the dream".⁶

In this brief summary we can identify a number of structural parallels with architectural form in general and this building in particular. Every building has a façade; it may have hidden chambers; it is fundamentally about spatial relationships; and it has the capacity to articulate meaning through those relationships. As in dreams, so in architecture and

our other creations. For Freud the psychic mechanisms typical of dreams are universal in human behavior, and they can be seen in all the works of man. They can be identified in the creation of poetry, as well as collective attempts to construct meaning “in fairy-tales, myths and legends, in jokes and in folk-lore...”⁷ They can be seen to operate in the seemingly innocuous constructions of everyday life as well as the imaginations of the mentally ill:

“In fact [...] the dream-work is only the first to be discovered of a whole series of psychical processes, responsible for the generation of hysterical symptoms, of phobias, obsessions and delusions [...] A whole number of the phenomena of the everyday life of healthy people—such as forgetting, slips of the tongue, bungled actions and a particular class of errors—owe their origin to a psychical mechanism analogous to that of dreams ...”⁸

As human creations, part poetry, part plan, part accident, architecture and the structures of a world exhibition are comprehensible in this way.

The Palais du Champ de Mars can be understood as one of the “composite animals” of which Freud speaks. It has a face: the Rue des Nations and the Pavilion de Paris. And it has a belly, one pushed to the side and out of the way: the *forces motrices* in the annex space. It is precisely the obscure and eccentric quality of the phenomenon that hints at its participation in dreamwork, as the trivial element to which true meaning is displaced. Hence the intense, compelling, and even frightening experience which accompanied its (accidental) discovery by visitors. This complex of seemingly incidental yet vividly experienced spaces and structures resonates with Freud’s description of intense psychic experiences, displaced from the center of a dream while mystifyingly central to it. And as though to underline that this chimera is a fabrication, its belly and face are inverted and even severed from each other: they bear no relationship. The strangeness of this assemblage hints at a deeper meaning, and of course for Freud the whole point of a dream is that it hides something. If we have described the structure of a dream here, what of its content? What exactly does this dream dissimulate? To answer this question we will have to dig a little more deeply, drawing into our discussion another—and perhaps unexpected—writer on fantasy: Karl Marx.

Let us examine the displaced center in a little more depth. Sitting there in their sweating fissure, the *forces motrices* formed the roots of a network that stretched throughout the building’s machine galleries. The motion generated by the steam engines was transmitted by a network of drive shafts connected by belts and gears to the hundreds of machines on display. The transmission lines were carried underground where necessary, but for the most part they ran above ground, down the center of the Galleries des Machines.⁹ This was the first Exposition to have such an extensive and exposed transmission tree; earlier ones had been buried entirely underground. The transmission in itself would have had as powerful a visual and tactile presence as did the engines and their towering smokestacks. The infrastructure supporting the transmission tree was at least 6 meters high, running down the Galleries des Machines (each of which was 25 m high at its apex, 35 m wide, and

700 m long). The network supported more than 2000 m of spinning drive shafts. Attached to these were thousands of meters of belts, each powering a machine. The galleries were filled with working machines from (on one side of the Palais) France and (on the other side) the rest of the world. All of these derived their power from the *forces motrices*, to which they were connected by kilometers of mechanical transmission.



Figure 4. Vue Générale de la Galerie des Machines. Detail of *Vue générale de la galerie des machines*: image from *Librairie illustrée, L'art et l'industrie de tous les peuples à l'Exposition universelle de 1878*, (Paris: Librairie illustrée, 1880) 409.

The scale and impact of this ensemble is conveyed by this image and the following lines from a document of the times:

“la galerie ... présente un coup d’œil superbe, c’est un brouhaha de monde, un bruit de machines, une animation extraordinaire, un va-et-vient continu, et par-dessus tout se bruit, par-dessus toute cette immense rumeur. La grande voix de l’orgue qui semble chanter la gloire de l’industrie.”¹⁰

“the gallery presents a superb vista, a hubbub of people, a hum of machines, an extraordinary vitality, a continual back-and forth, and above all the noise, the immense racket. The great voice of an organ which seems to sing the glory of industry.” (author’s translation)

This description is reinforced by the words of another observer, Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc, describing one of the two machine galleries:

“Quand fonctionneront ensemble ces engines mécaniques sur une longueur de 700 mètres, ce sera là un spectacle fait pour émerveiller, car *aucune usine au monde ne présente un pareil développement des forces dues à l’industrie moderne.*”¹¹

“When these mechanical engines function along the length of 700 m, it would be a spectacle to marvel at, because *no factory in the world presents such a development of the forces of modern industry.*” (author’s translation and emphasis)

No factory in the world... Viollet-le-Duc’s astute words underline by contradiction that the exhibition had in effect created a world factory, a model for but also a representation of the machinery of industry which now extended to the four corners of the Earth, from which the artifacts on display in the exhibition were drawn.

This world factory—this arrangement of central power source, extensive transmission, and massed machines—had been identified a decade earlier, in Chapter 15 of Marx’s *Capital*, as characteristic of modern industry. For Marx such an assembly is representative of a key change in human history: a moment when, as part of the evolution from man-based to machine-based manufacture, one power source begins to be used to power multiple machines. When this happened,

“[o]ne motive mechanism was now able to drive many machines at once. The motive mechanism grows with the number of machines that are turning simultaneously, and the *transmitting mechanism becomes a wide-spreading apparatus...* there is here a technical oneness in the whole system, owing to all the machines receiving their impulse simultaneously, and in an equal degree, from the pulsations of the common prime mover, by the intermediary of the transmitting mechanism; and this mechanism, to a certain extent, is also common to them all, since only particular ramifications of it branch off to each machine. Just as a number of tools, then, form the organs of a machine, so a number of machines of one kind constitute the organs of the motive mechanism.”¹²

These words anticipate precisely the scene in the Galerie des Machines. In particular the use of the term “organ” is telling. Marx develops this idea further to reveal the real significance of such a system:

“An organized system of machines, to which motion is communicated by the transmitting mechanism from a central automaton, is the most developed form of production by machinery. Here we have, in the place of the isolated machine, *a mechanical monster whose body fills whole factories, and whose demon power, at first veiled under the slow and measured motion of its giant limbs, at length breaks out into the fast and furious whirl of his countless working organs.*”¹³

This is not mere hyperbole on the part of Marx. Understood in the context of his analysis of commodities and their production, Marx's rhetoric articulates the uncanny transformation of the machine in conditions of capital. For Marx the modern relationship of things to each other contradicts their nature as things and replaces it with a nature as abstractions, as numbers, by relative exchange value. They now embody the whole process of exchange, and this makes them both more and less than objects. Marx uses the illustration of a table made for sale as an example of this loss of the material aspect of the product. He says of the table: "as soon as it steps forth as a commodity, it is changed into something transcendent [...] It not only stands with its feet on the ground, but in relation to all other commodities, it stands on its head and evolves out of its wooden brain grotesque ideas..."¹⁴ As the table becomes both more and less than its material self, a related change occurs in its maker: his or her relationships to others cease to be properly human, and become about exchange. And those relations become embodied in the objects of exchange: "(t)here [...] is a definite social relation between men that assumes, in their eyes, the fantastic form of a relation between things."¹⁵ As human relations come to be embodied perversely in relations between things, those things become fetish-like. For Marx this was why his contemporaries were so fascinated by the objects on display at the world's fairs.

Thus Marx' description of the factory as a "mechanical monster" possessing a "demon power" is far more than a rhetorical device. Such animistic imagery might seem out of place, even ironic, in a historically materialist argument. But it underlines that in conditions of capital which evacuate life from things and abstract us from a material and interpersonal reality, our imaginations are haunted by creatures which are themselves both alive and dead, materially present and abstract: monsters, phantoms. They are the nightmarish, quasi-living beings into which machines transform, even as we human beings move in the opposite direction, our lives—our relations with others—are replaced by a relationship between things. This imagery demonstrates a remarkable, even tragic, sensibility on Marx's part, one open to much more than economics, and to the commonalities between factories, capital markets, and dreams.

In *On Dreams* Freud refers in his own way to a demonic power. He ascribes and compares the unpleasant welling-up of thoughts, the thoughts a dream attempts to dissimulate, to a *daemonic element*, "as though one person who was dependent upon a second person had to make a remark which was bound to be disagreeable in the ears of this second one."¹⁶ The demonic element is the voice we try to shut up, our unpleasant double whom we attempt to hide away behind the veil of the dream.

In this case, Marx's demon and Freud's demon are one. This demon, present in our dreams and in our works, represents modern humanity's double, the nasty voice which says what it wants—i.e., what we want, and simultaneously fear: the technological apparatus which serves us and then replaces us. In Marx's words: "The instrument of labor, when it takes the form of a machine, immediately becomes a competitor of the workman himself." His labor

power, his only commodity and his only value in the world of industrial capital, vanishes, and the automaton wins: “The instrument of labor strikes down the laborer”¹⁷ and “the laborer becomes a mere appendage to an already existing material condition of production.”¹⁸ A mere façade, an ornament applied to the machine, a skin draped over it.

There is another dimension to this process. As the thing, the worker who made it, and the user who purchases it, are progressively alienated from each other and the process of its creation, there is a parallel and specific transformation in the relationship of the thing to its image. The image becomes a part of the economy of exchange that rapidly replaces the economy of use (and usefulness) that used to govern making. Signs and other representations are, as it were, torn away from objects.

In this light we can reconsider what might be implied by the façades of the Rue des Nations and the Pavillon de Paris. These façades were ultimately signs: signs of the world, and of the city. Arrayed on this internalized street, the façades of the Rue des Nations come to represent a severing from their countries of origin, from which they have been transported by the machinery of global industry. In the case of the Pavillon, the alienation is from the real city of Paris, to which as we have seen the exhibition turns its back. In both cases the severing parallels the alienation of the worker from his work. The result is a purely fantastic skin, a fantasy that presents only the fruits of modernity: a promise of access to the world that disavows the hollowing out of that world in conditions of capital.

As I have already suggested, this architectural skin can also be seen without contradiction as what Freud described as the interpretive revision: the false façade that the dream creates (unsuccessfully) to disguise its true nature. To revisit our earlier analysis: the heart of this dream has been displaced from the center to the outside, where it is disguised in seemingly minor elements, almost invisible in many views of the building. These—*the forces motrices*—are nevertheless given a heightened phenomenal character by a seemingly accidental juxtaposition with eating and drinking establishments. They and the space around them form a composite figure or pictorial arrangement with the transmission network and the central slit containing the Rue des Nations and the Pavillon de Paris—the sham façade erected by the dreamwork. This assemblage, while presented as a wonder, a marvel of industry, and one that enraptured the crowds at the exhibition, was also a nightmare that displayed and dissimulated the unspoken desires and fears of modernity spatially. It represented no less than a mechanical demon inhabiting the body of the Champ de Mars building, condensing desire and fear in the composite figure of a building become automaton. Its belly, spine, loins and heart—its chimney and hearth—have been pushed outside, still connected to the whirring mechanism of its skeleton and musculature. And meanwhile its face has been replaced by a mask, torn out of its own context, and then internalized—perhaps even eaten.

This is our greatest fear, the threat implicit in the dreams of technology embodied in world fairs. We desire and fear our own extinction, the substitution of the machine body for our own body; and as a corollary, we desire and fear the substitution of the sign and the sign's place in an exchange mechanism, for the thing it represents. These desires and fears suggest a time when the demon automaton becomes a substitute not only for bodies but also for dreams: dissimulating skins transported from around the globe and composited over the machinery of production. In this sense perhaps, the world on display in the Palais du Champ de Mars of 1878 has more than a little in common with our own.

¹Librarie Illustrée & Libraire M. Dreyfous, *Les Merveilles de l'Exposition de 1878: histoire, construction, inauguration, description des palais, annexes et parcs ... ouvrage rédigé par des écrivains spéciaux et des ingénieurs* (Paris: Librarie Illustrée & Libraire M. Dreyfous, 1878), 30.

²Sigmund Freud, *On Dreams* (London: The Hogarth Press, 1952), 25.

³Freud, *On Dreams*, 52.

⁴Ibid., 37.

⁵Ibid., 46.

⁶Sigmund Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams* (London: G. Allen & Unwin; New York: Macmillan, 1937), 453.

⁷Freud, *On Dreams*, 70.

⁸Ibid., 51.

⁹A total of 2,176 m, of transmission: compare this to the total of 792 m, in the previous world exhibition in Philadelphia in 1867.

¹⁰Librarie Illustrée & Libraire M. Dreyfous, *Merveilles*, 31.

¹¹Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-Le-Duc, "Les Batiments de l'Exposition Universelle de 1878," *L'Art: Revue Hebdomadaire Illustrée* 13 (1878): 138.

¹²Karl Marx, *Capital* (New York: The Modern Library, 1906), 412-414.

¹³Marx, *Capital*, 417-418.

¹⁴Ibid., 84

¹⁵Marx, 83.

¹⁶Freud, *On Dreams*, 58.

¹⁷Marx, *Capital*, 470-472

¹⁸Marx, *Capital*, 421.

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5.4.

Beyond the Event: World's Fairs and Urban Transformations Since World War II

Gaia Caramellino | Alessandro De Magistris | Federico Deambrosis

The Universal Exhibitions have generally been studied in a monographic way, or by looking at perspectives deeply rooted in visual culture that aim to capture the uniqueness and the iconic impact of the events, measuring that impact as a function of the quantitative rhetoric that flourished between the nineteenth and early twentieth century. These world's fairs have rarely been the subject of studies that have measured their impact in terms of their long-term effects against the background of territorial modernization, observed in a broader framework of planning strategies. The prevailing view in research devoted to the phenomenon reconstructs the physical premises of the fairs, which are closely related to preparation for the events as spectacular, but spatially and temporally enclosed, “machines”. Within this perspective, research that aims to delineate a comprehensive reading—both synchronic and diachronic—of these spectacular events has been even more rare until recently. However, world's fairs signaled chronologies of change and played a decisive role in them. The increasing attention now paid by urban studies to the hosting of international events and the perspective that tends to place these spectacular devices in a systemic framework has led to a change in viewpoint and methodological approach.

Far from considering themselves as “white elephants” or “cathedrals” in the desert, and far from being regarded merely for their ephemeral appearance, world's fairs, whose impact goes well beyond the local scale, are events that lie in a complex framework of relationships, rooted in the lives of individual cities, and the individual and collective stories of elites. Moreover, they mobilize significant investments and resources, often involving national choices and established geographies of territorial competition. Despite their apparent and institutional characteristics, encoded from the early decades of the twentieth century on, world's fairs, like the Olympic Games, belong to the long process of city modernization and design that tends in some cases to define a kind of “tradition” capable of confirming specific vocations and centralities. These characteristics are blatantly manifested through the typological framework of what we call “mega events” and evident in the cases of Paris, New York, and Barcelona. Barcelona, for instance, hosted first the Expo (1929) in the area of Montjuic and then the Fair, triggering a process of transformation, associated with urban expansion, which ended with the work for the Olympic Games in 1992.

Assuming the perspective of mega events is essential for capturing the unique characteristics of postwar expos, a phase of profound transformation of strategies and forms, as well as of the social and cultural context of urban development.¹ The importance of the mega event as a specific carrier or hub of urban transformation has become increasingly evident since the last two decades of the twentieth century. This period coincided, at an international level, with the decline of the traditional factors of development of the industrial cycle that started after World War II; it witnessed instead the emergence of new dynamics related to the growth of the tertiary sector, to long-distance competition in search of growing visibility in the media, and to a new relationship between the local and the international.

The period also corresponded to a different way of analyzing spectacular phenomena in relation to territorial processes. If from the 1960s-1970s on initiatives of various kinds with great appeal seem to grow in number and acquire increasing media prominence thanks to the impact of mass media in public life, it is not until the 1980s-1990s that a specific literature emerges and is consolidated that aims to systematically analyze mega events in terms of the impact of image and economic and “urban boosterism.”² This literature on “para-diplomacy” and also on “leisure” and tourism³, together with scientific research on internationalization and urban competition, has developed over the last ten to fifteen years, stressing the importance of mega events as “growth machines,” a category previously developed for residential and tertiary interventions (during the 1960s and 1970s) and great mobility infrastructures (1970s-1980s). Within this new framework the fairs are increasingly seen as a privileged instance of urban regeneration, infrastructure enhancement, city marketing, and initiatives promoted through the practice of strategic planning⁴ aimed at improving the image and competitiveness of a city on the international market.⁵

Confirming this perspective, the last decades of the twentieth century saw not only an increase in the applications for exhibitions and Olympic Games, but also gave prominence to the extreme rivalry for nominations. These applications are almost always a sounding board for programs of regional renewal on a scale unknown in the past. This period followed years of large factory closures and big investments that triggered a new phase of modernization. For some cities, world’s fairs seem to indicate a visible line of demarcation in the recent phase of development, inaugurating a new cycle of development and a new design practice.

TOWARDS A POSSIBLE CHRONOLOGY

A remarkable laboratory for education in the field of urban life, the European and American exhibitions of the late nineteenth century anticipated some fundamental concerns of twentieth-century exhibitions. Beyond the organizational differences (if French fairs were set up by the state, British and American events took shape thanks to private funding), all the expositions proposed “a mixture of values and objects” which “looked back to early modern Wunderkammer while mimicking the spaces of the modern shopping emporia.”⁶

All the fairs confirmed an inextricable relationship with the city and its changes, an aspect that is in the limelight in the case of Paris. The concentration of attractions in the middle of the city meant that the city itself was on display. The tendency to spill over the borders of the fairs' enclosures became, over time, more and more evident, reaching a climax on the occasion of the World Fair of 1900 in Paris, when one of the highlights was the first subway line, whose inauguration was made to coincide with the opening of the event.

In light of the profound transformations that deeply marked European societies after World War I, the nature of the events changed radically between the 1920s and 1930s, deeply influenced by the emergence of the first experiences of welfare that enlarged the geographies of leisure. During this period a variety of other cultural initiatives led to regular events acknowledged as great spectacles, such as the Milan Triennale or the Biennale of cinema in Venice, Italy. As the 1933 Chicago World's Fair Building of Tomorrow⁷ or the Moscow agrarian fairs reflect, these changes were also influenced by the intensification of the relationship between political action and propaganda, particularly evident in the totalitarian contexts, which would give to cultural and sports events certain specific ideological implications.

During these years exhibitions started to attract attention for the innovative aspects of the built pavilions: architectural research and experiments in the design of ephemeral structures acquired a central role in the shaping and organization of events that would mark the collective memory being used in a propagandistic way. This was the case with a number of pavilions built on the occasion of the *Exposition des Arts Decoratives* held in Paris in 1925, such as the Polish pavilion that contributed to the circulation on both sides of the Atlantic of what would be called the Art Deco style, and the mythical Soviet pavilion, which stood out for its radical formal vocabulary. It was also true of the German pavilion at the Barcelona 1929 exhibition, designed by Mies van der Rohe, as well as of the Chicago World's Fair of 1933 (aimed at representing images of rebirth through its famous futuristic installations) and the New York's "Tomorrow's World" of 1939.

The postwar years did not introduce any major innovations and the central problems of reconstruction limited the organization of exhibitions to local and national boundaries until the end of the 1950s. We have to wait until the second half of that decade to notice an effective shift. New typologies and new phenomena emerged during the period that, on the one hand, were influenced by social transformations that mirrored postwar experiences, but, on the other, were produced by the economic conditions of the boom years (but also by the Cold War, by the explosion of mass tourism⁸ and by the development of a late capitalism marked by new patterns of consumption and new cultural dynamics influenced by the media).⁹

A crucial factor in the interpretation of this phase is the seeming decline in those years of the "urban variable", which, as argued by Weber, fulfilled a long-term trend that started

with the emergence of the nation state. According to some scholars, the era of the city seemed to be at an end. Less dramatically, some years later Philip Abrams stressed the fact that the city, during those years, had become a stage rather than an actor, a mere container of more complex economic and social processes.¹⁰

However, the growing research behind and sophistication of the architectural works (sometimes representing leading expressions of architectural culture) and the “poetry of great size” (proposing an intermediate scale between architecture and planning) represented a reaction to this critical situation and to the growing crisis that affected the visibility of the exhibitions during these years, afflicted by competition with a variety of new, specialized events. This aspect has been seen by some scholars as a tendency to introduce an element of critique into the urban scene of the period. Although, as mentioned before, the influence of architectural research in the configuration of exhibition pavilions acquired a certain level of importance during the early decades of the twentieth century, it is undeniable that this aspect became particularly striking after the end of World War II.

The 1939 New York World’s Fair constituted a significant laboratory of innovative and aerodynamic design that had an international diffusion and anticipated the postwar idea of Americanization and the new architectural discourse. Moreover, from Brussels ’58 to Italia ’61, from Montreal ’67 to Osaka ’70, through the 1964 Tokyo Olympic Games, not only world’s fairs but all the international events were imprinted on the collective memory thanks to these strong architectural signs, some of which remain as a legacy to the city hosting the event.

After eighteen years of hiatus due to the war, world’s fairs began again with the 1958 Brussels World Exposition devoted to the “Balance of the World for a More Humane World”. This fair marked a significant shift, strongly influenced by new forms of organization of leisure and mass consumption and by motorization and mass movement,¹¹ as mirrored by the shopping malls and thematic parks shaped on the model of Disneyworld.¹² The innovative architectural research of the individual pavilions, as well as of the entire system, became the key to success for exhibitions, deeply affected by increasing competition with sports events. It is a commonplace that the image and memory of this Expo were marked by the Atomium (the steel building 100 meters high made of nine spheres with a diameter of 18 meters, connected by escalators), which quickly became an icon of the nuclear era. But this famous building-sculpture was only one of the achievements that made the Universal Exhibition of 1958 a remarkable showcase of avant-garde architecture in the late fifties.

Perhaps the most innovative and challenging building was the pavilion designed by Le Corbusier for Philips, which was dismantled after the exhibition; it rapidly emerged as a symbol of an innovative season, marked by masterworks such as the TWA Terminal in New York, the Sydney Opera House, or the Berlin Philharmonic. Based on the innovative idea of “synthesis of the arts,” the Philips Pavilion constituted a joint effort of the Swiss architect

who directed the entire work, the engineer and composer Iannis Xenakis, and Edgar Varèse, the author of the *Poème Electronique* which was broadcast through 350 speakers. The modernity of Philips' products was represented through a modern "tent" built with the technology of suspended shells and undulating vaults. A continuous surface enclosed the interior of the pavilion in which it was possible to have an all-encompassing experience of hearing and vision thanks to the use of audiovisual materials as a part of the architectural design.

Not less interesting—and emblematic of the fate of the exhibitions during this phase—was the experience of Italia '61 in Turin, which is still remembered abroad for the Palazzo del Lavoro by P. L. Nervi, unfortunately abandoned until today. The design and construction of the building attracted the most impressive and articulated concentration of skills and resources in the city. Approved in 1956 and rapidly built thanks to great architectural dexterity after the decision to focus the program on the major recent themes and contradictions of modernization, this building and the fair it housed enjoyed unquestionable success and demonstrated the ability of local elites of the time to handle events of great complexity.

The same thing happened in 1967 to the Montreal World's Fair, which emulated the success of the Parisian event of 1900, marking for some scholars the end of a glorious cycle of exhibitions: part of the funds devoted to the event remained as a legacy for the Canadian city, while the World's Fair is still remembered for the giant geodesic dome of the U.S. Pavilion designed by Buckminster Fuller and the experimental Habitat project by Moshe Safdie based on the combination of prefabricated modular elements.

The Osaka Exhibition, planned in 1970 to prolong the aura inaugurated by the Olympic Games in Tokyo, acquired the symbolic role of inaugural event of the new decade and is still remembered for the general layout designed by Kenzo Tange and for the Festival Plaza by Arata Isozaki and Atsushi Ueda, in which leading figures and institutions of the national architectural culture (such as the Japan Institute of Architects and Architects Association) showcased the results of the radical research that had brought Japan's avant-garde design culture to world attention a decade earlier.

Despite these successes, in a multi-faceted panorama certain events have been totally neglected by collective memory, regardless of the ambitions behind them and the engagement of private resources. This is the case of the New York World's Fair dedicated in 1964 to "Peace Through Understanding," the largest event held in the United States and organized without the official approval of the BIE (*Bureau International des Expositions*) on the occasion of the anniversary of the founding of the city. The Fair Corporation did not impose a specific layout for the design of the pavilions which produced a confused landscape typical of amusement parks but definitely out of date in the field of exhibition design.

The final result looked extremely different from the modern vocabulary produced in 1939, shaped by some of the best designers of the period (from Alvar Aalto to Norman Bel Geddes). They summarized hope in the future by focusing on two fundamental concerns: attention to the consumer and innovative design. These, combined in different ways, left an enduring legacy on commercial, cultural, and political strategies after World War II.

WORLD'S FAIRS AND URBAN TRANSFORMATIONS AFTER WORLD WAR II

The postwar years did not immediately introduce any important new elements. The urgent need for reconstruction and the crucial new role played by planning as a tool for reorganizing major urban polarities, the territory, and the national economic structure dominated the debate and the government agendas of European states. In such a context more generally marked by the definition of the geopolitical landscape of the Cold War, the Belgian government in the early 1950s nominated Brussels to host the first postwar world's fair, realizing the potential impact of the event on several levels. Characterized by a series of engineering *tours de force* and defined as the "Festival of Structures" by the critics of the time,¹³ Expo '58 has been read primarily as an effective synthesis of the state of design culture in the late 1950s. The technological optimism and the contraposition between the Atlantic bloc and the socialist countries produced an almost playful rivalry between the national pavilions, played out very often on a structural level. But Expo 58 was also a fundamental step in government efforts to assert the capital of Belgium as a key hub in the new map of Europe rapidly being redefined.¹⁴

The rhetoric of the "Carrefour de l'Occident" refers explicitly to a supranational dimension and fits coherently into a broad strategy that, seen now in retrospect, could be called successful. In the mid-fifties it appeared urgent to open a large number of works that would start a reconfiguration of the city center functionally and morphologically inspired by the western city of late capitalism. At a moment between a new phase of Americanization of international design culture, the postwar International Congresses of Modern Architecture, and a series of important experiences including some competitions when the model of the western city of late capitalism was being rapidly and progressively updated, Brussels seemed to transpose its most recurring features: increasing capacity and rationalization of urban transport, with particular attention to private mobility made possible by creating a system of efficient traffic routes, and an effective administrative center with predominantly vertical development.

In both cases, the reasons underlying the intervention had begun to emerge previously and with relative autonomy with respect to the event. The "bottleneck" formed by the center of the capital was amongst the most urgent problems of the national road system and was part of the impetus for the new program to strengthen it that was launched at the beginning of the decade. Similarly, the gap between the upper and the lower part of the city which would be "sealed" by the construction of the new administrative center was evident in the topography of a city in which both the government and the protagonists of the "Belgian economic miracle" seem desirous of new symbols. Thus the center of the

city became the scene of a transformation or, as one point of view put it, of a “massacre”¹⁵ to an even greater extent than the Heysel plateau, the 200-hectare area eight kilometers from the center that hosted the exhibition site and where some interventions undertaken for the fair of 1935 had been developed. Despite some earlier work, the transformation of the center city and the world’s fair were intimately linked. In fact, the latter offered certain conditions without which the outcome of the first would probably not have been the same, in time and manner.

Expo ’58 provided extraordinary visibility for the agents of the transformation: the high number of visitors, including about eighty percent of the population residing in the country as well as many visitors from abroad, guaranteed an almost immediate repositioning of the city on the international map and in collective perception. The fair, the logistics deadlines associated with the high turnout, and the need for a “decent” image of the city were arguments that gave the administrators and organizers of the event the upper hand in prevailing dialectically against the great resistance caused by the start of the transformation. Finally, as perhaps the greatest determinant and no doubt cyclical element in the relationship between mega events and urban transformations in the second half of the twentieth century, the world’s fair imposed on the transformation a deadline that ensured its realization, even if many of the works were not finished by the time the Expo opened.

Referring to a more local scale, at least for the reasons underlying the event, the celebrations for the centenary of the unification of Italy, held in Turin in 1961, counted on a remarkable mobilization of resources involving the national government, the local administration, and some private players active on the local scene, among whom was the Fiat company. With the perspective adopted here, it is important to notice that it was mainly durable and not ephemeral structures that were planned for this fair. The Palazzo del Lavoro by Pier Luigi Nervi and Gino Covi and the Palazzo a Vela by Franco Levi and Annibale and Giorgio Rigotti quickly became the most remarkable episodes in the construction of an urban gate at one of the main entrances to the city center from the south. The design and the construction of this “gate” were integrated with the consolidation of the city within its administrative boundaries. The works on the exhibition site, in fact, went hand in hand with the definition of planning instruments in order to urbanize the adjacent neighborhood of Millefonti, still characterized by several vacant lots. This operation, not without speculative intentions, created a qualified, predominantly residential, periphery, which defined the southern edge of the workers’ neighborhood created near the Fiat Lingotto factory during the same years.¹⁶

Remembered as a failure, Italia ’61 was, in fact, far from being planned according to a short-sighted perspective: on the contrary, it was organized to leave an important material legacy that would accompany the development of a still abandoned part of the urban periphery. The neglect that now affects many “futuristic” structures is due not to a lack of

foresight with which these were designed, but to an inability to integrate such exceptional buildings into a metropolitan scale of planning and design and to the beginning of a crisis, culminating in the tensions of 1968 and 1969, which rendered “obsolete” the vision of the city for which these projects had been elaborated. In any case, a few of the buildings created for the 1961 Exhibition of Italian unity would form the basis for the organization of the Olympic Winter Games held in Turin in 2006.¹⁷

The New York World’s Fair, organized in 1964-1965 in Flushing Meadows (Queens) without the approval of the BIE, has been viewed as a missed opportunity for the professional community to provide an adequate response to a radically changed context marked by the supremacy of the United States and a new season of events. Actually the Fair, dedicated to “Peace Through Understanding,” was an excellent opportunity to implement infrastructure and the redevelopment of Queens through the creation of a new urban park, an operation that was begun in the 1930s. The Fair of 1964 is emblematic of the continuous role played by some actors and institutions, including the director of the entire operation, Robert Moses, in the design, implementation, and management of the event.¹⁸

The New York Fair also provided an opportunity to accelerate the infrastructure expansion underway as part of an ambitious program with impact that can be traced in some interventions outside the exhibition area: the redevelopment of the waterfront, the building of the Verrazano bridge, and the construction of cultural centers. The urban legacy of the event coincided in this case with an intense season of transformations and with the affirmation of an urban vision that already showed its weaknesses in the immediate postwar years and that began to be criticized in the 1960s. The Fair also offered Robert Moses the chance to fund a program that gave priority to urban interventions over ephemeral construction, partly sacrificing the outcome of the event on behalf of the long term.¹⁹

A few years later, Expo '67 in Montreal, organized on the occasion of the centenary celebrations of the Canadian state and considered one of the most successful events of the twentieth century (with more than 50,000,000 visitors), highlighted the intent to close the infrastructural gap of the 1940s and 1950s by the new technocratic ruling class. With the project for the tertiarization of the economy of Ile Sainte-Hélène through the construction of a new administrative center, the *plan directeur* of Expo '67 confirmed an urban vision based on individual projects and specific interventions, directed by big actions and intended to catalyze the development of the urban transportation system, consolidating the centrality of Montreal in the area. The building of infrastructure, which began in parallel to the works for Expo '67, intervened strongly on the landscape and the river area was converted to recreation and leisure. The fair was also an opportunity for the construction (already underway) of the Underground of Montreal, for Ile Sainte-Hélène’s extension, for Ile Notre-Dame’s creation, and for the construction of new bridges and infrastructure such as the Montreal Expo Express. Thus Expo '67 started a policy, then resumed for the 1976 Olympic Games, that fed a culture of management widespread in public administration and among professionals of the major Canadian offices.

The fairs of the final decades of the twentieth century that followed Osaka '70 adopted new features and thus introduced a progressive rethinking of world's fairs' culture. It can be observed in many contexts that projects are triggered by the event, and, indeed, often transcend the physical and temporal limits of the spectacular occasion to take a clear centrality and to become the first objective of investment. What survives the event, its permanent trace, thus becomes an inseparable part of the mechanism of construction of an overall image that can spread from the event to the context. There are innumerable examples of what can currently be considered a standardized procedure, beyond the actual results achieved.

The International Genoa Exhibition in 1992 was successfully used by the city during the 1980s-1990s to define the redevelopment of the port (whose production activities had taken place in a western area), to rethink the relationship between the waterfront and the city (modeled on the experiences of Baltimore and Boston), and to start a massive process of restructuring and modernization inspired by Renzo Piano.

The same occasion, the fifth centenary of the discovery of America, as celebrated at Expo '92 in Seville, became an opportunity to plan one of the most extensive and concerted territorial and urban actions of contemporary Spain, although its potential resonance was, perhaps, obscured by the Olympic Games.²⁰ Exploited to give a major boost to a weak area, the fair became a powerful magnet for investment in infrastructure—the first line of the Spanish High Speed Railway—and the colonization of an area of 215 hectares on the banks of the Guadalquivir River, located on the western margin of the urban center.²¹

Even the last of the twentieth-century fairs, held in Lisbon in 1998, became, through careful planning begun five years earlier, the starting point for the development of a marginal area of the city on land recovered from the disposal of polluting industrial plants. The fair was a mere “pretext” for launching a project for a new sub-center at a metropolitan scale.

The scenarios of crisis accompanying the early twenty-first century in Europe seem to lead to a downsizing of the ambitions related to continental fairs, challenged by increasingly dense and spectacular events, among other factors. What we see, at the start of the new millennium, is a competitive multiplication of exceptional events of various kinds. In such a context, it is possible to recognize a reconsideration of the consolidated features of fairs since the postwar period in favor of experiments that allow a mitigation of the economic impact, undermining the idea of the exhibition area, and adapting the design of the event to the characteristics of an ever-widening area, able to absorb the effects and the benefits of the event. Testimony to this new perspective can be found in the Swiss Fair of 2002 and in the debate that led to defining the characteristics of the Universal Exposition to be held in Milan in 2015.

Contrary to what seems to be happening in Europe, the material legacy of the tradition of twentieth-century world's fairs is triumphing in new areas of development, as clearly evidenced by the leading role of China, which had its overture in the Olympic Games in Beijing in 2008.

Expo 2010 in Shanghai benefited from the presence of a powerful internal market and, planned in anticipation of a successful Olympics, was designed to accommodate seventy million people under the slogan "Better City, Better Life". It was part of the massive changes that have transformed the face of the Asian metropolis. The appropriation of 2.8 billion euros (28.6 billion yuan) was intended to give a decisive contribution to the regeneration of the city. An integral part of the design of the Exposition, built on both sides of the Huangpu River, in an area of old buildings and homes, was the move to the periphery of many obsolete factories, shipyards, and the big Baosteel steel mill. Along with large green areas, six new subway lines were created and Pudong International Airport was much enhanced, tripling its capacity to some sixty-four million passengers per year. Paradoxically, the success of Shanghai 2010 seems to celebrate the vitality of an instrument deeply tied to the history of the city and to the urban culture of the nineteenth century.

¹Leo van den Berg and Jan van der Borg, *Urban Tourism: Performance and Strategies in Eight European Cities* (London: Ashgate, 1995).

²C. Michael Hall, *Hallmark Tourist Events. Impact, Management and Planning* (London: 1992); Donald Getz, *Event Management and Event Tourism* (New York: Cognizant Communication Corporation, 1997); Stephen Essex and Brian Chalkley, "Olympic Games: Catalyst of Urban Change," *Leisure Studies* 17/3 (1998): 187-206; Brian Chalkley and Stephen Essex, "Urban Development through Hosting international Events," *Planning Perspectives* 14/4 (1999): 369-94.

³Valéry Patin, *Tourisme et patrimoine* (Paris: Flammarion, 2005).

⁴Paolo Perulli, *Piani strategici. Governare le città europee* (Milan: Franco Angeli, 2004).

⁵Ernesto D'Albergo and Christian Lefèvre, eds., *Le strategie internazionali delle città* (Bologna: il Mulino, 2007).

⁶Jane Kromm and Susan Benforando Backewell, eds., *History of Visual Culture: Western Civilization from the 18th to the 21st Century* (London: Berg, 2010).

⁷Lisa D. Schrenk, *Building a Century of Progress: the architecture of Chicago's 1933-34 World's Fair* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007); Cheryl Ganz, *The 1933 Chicago World's Fair: Century of Progress* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2008).

⁸Marc Boyer, *Histoire du tourisme de masse* (Paris: PUF, 1999).

⁹On the relationship between Cold War and exhibitions see Robert H. Haddow, *Pavilions of Plenty: Exhibiting American Culture Abroad in 1950s* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1997). Jack Massey, Conway Lloyd Morgan, *Cold War Confrontation. US Exhibitions and Their Role in the Cultural Cold War* (Berlin: Lars Muller, 2008).

¹⁰Some years later Philip Abrams advocated the role of the city as a scene rather than an actor, as well as a container of wider economic and social phenomena. See Abrams, *Towns and Economic Growth: Some Theories and Problems* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978).

¹¹Alain Corbin, ed., *L'Avenement des loisirs* (1850-1960) (Paris: Flammarion, 1995).

¹²Diane Ghirardo, *Architecture after Modernism* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1996). See also Stanislaus von Moos, *Nicht Disneyland* (Zurich: Scheidegger & Spiess, 2004).

¹³"Architecture at Brussels: Festival of Structures", *Architectural Record* 123 (1958): 163-170; Frank Newby, "Playing with structure. Some impressions of the Brussels exhibition," *The Builder* 194 (February 21, 1958): 354-356.

¹⁴On Brussels Expo '58 see: Rika Devos, "Expo 58: The Catalyst for Belgium's Welfare State Government complex?" *Planning Perspectives*, vol. 26/4 (2011): 649-659. See also Rika Devos, Mil de Kooning, *Modern architecture at Expo '58* (Brussels, 2006); Gonzague Pluvillage, ed., *Expo 58: Between Utopia and Reality* (Brussels, 2008).

¹⁵Michel Ragon, *Histoire mondiale de l'architecture et de l'urbanisme modernes* (Tournai: Casterman, 1972).

¹⁶Cristiana Chiorino, Sergio Pace, and Michela Rosso, *Italia '61, the Nation on Show* (Turin: Allemandi, 2006).

¹⁷Alessandro De Magistris, "Dopo i Giochi del 2006. Uno sguardo alla Torino post-olimpica," *Casabella* 755 (2007): 4-13.

¹⁸Lawrence R. Samuel, *End of the innocence: The 1964-1965 New York World's Fair* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2007).

¹⁹Robert A.M. Stern, *New York 1960: Architecture and Urbanism between the Second World War and the Bicentennial* (New York: Rizzoli, 1997). See also Hilary Ballon and Kenneth T. Jackson, eds., *Robert Moses and the Modern City: The Transformation of New York* (New York: Norton, 2007).

²⁰Maurice Roche, *Mega-Events and Modernity: Olympics and Expos in the Growth of Global Culture* (London: Routledge, 2000)

²¹On the competition, see the themed issue of *Casabella* 528 (1986).

5.5.

Victor Gruen and the World's Fair That Wasn't

Timothy Mennel

In 1959, architect and urban designer Victor Gruen turned his attention from shopping malls and downtown revitalization plans to an extensive proposal for a 1964 world's fair near Largo, Maryland, ten miles east of Washington, D.C. Gruen's ambitions had never been modest; in the previous four years, he had significantly influenced the form of postwar suburbia—with his development of the comprehensive enclosed suburban shopping center—and with his Fort Worth Plan had begun a conversation that was to reshape certain American downtowns. Designing an environment as large and complex as a world's fair was clearly within his powers; he was less well suited to designing less-than-permanent environments, however, and so here he did not. Gruen's world's fair would be an unprecedented spectacle for the type: a fairground that would become an actual, enduring, fully functional town.¹ Such a project stood in sharp contrast to the tacky-reality of the 1964–1965 fair in Queens that eventually beat out his proposal, and as a result Gruen's vision was posited by some contemporary critics as the great fair that got away.² Gruen's proposal was, in a sense, the logical culmination of his earlier large-scale projects, yet both the shopping mall and the Fort Worth Plan were eventually repudiated by many, and Gruen's legacy today is often seen as trivial, naïve, or simply wrongheaded. This essay will describe the genesis and content of Gruen's plan, note the influence it did have, and indicate some of the alternative urbanisms that it seems to have prefigured—all within a framework of failure.

Gruen seems almost fated to have proposed a fair. Not long after leaving Austria for America in the wake of the *Anschluss*, Gruen was employed for a time on the 1939 World's Fair in New York. He worked on Norman Bel Geddes's "Futurama" exhibition at the General Motors pavilion, an experience he found "a stimulating task in contemplating and bringing into visual form future ideas for transportation and city planning."³ Prior to this, Gruen's work had been almost entirely retail-oriented, with a particular focus on high-end storefront design. (His first major projects in America were for jewelers and a chocolatier.) After establishing his practice in Los Angeles, he worked on increasingly large projects, scaling up from storefronts to department stores to, in the early 1950s, shopping centers, beginning with the Northland Center outside of Detroit. His transformational project, however, was Northland's successor, Southdale, in a well-off suburb of Minneapolis.

Southdale purported to be not just a shopping center but a new physical form for a complete suburban community that would, Gruen hoped, both stimulate regional development and rejuvenate overcrowded and dilapidated downtowns. Southdale was fueled in part by a strain of postwar utopianism, and it was also an attempt to realize of the kind of satellite community that Ebenezer Howard had promoted decades before.⁴

In 1955, following the development of Southdale, although before its unprecedentedly successful opening, Gruen turned his sights both to entire downtowns, with the Fort Worth Plan, and to the country as a whole, with his “1976” vision of a transformed society. He returned to these ideas throughout the remainder of his career. In both cases, Gruen and his employees designed complete and largely autonomous environments.⁵ The Fort Worth Plan proposed ringing downtowns with giant city-owned parking garages, fed by highways from the suburbs, and pedestrianizing the core, with the aim of creating more congenial downtown environments. The city was to be transformed into a cellular, car-free business hub that would simultaneously save the downtown from blight and provide a template for other American cities pursuing both regulated development and new communitarian ideals.⁶ In linking urban form to social improvement, Gruen embodied what Paul Rabinow later called “middling modernism,” which sought “to create New Men freed, purified, and liberated to pursue new forms of sociality which would inevitably arise from healthy spaces and forms.”⁷ Yet, by 1959, this dream had been derailed by depressingly mundane forces: parking-lot owners who saw in Gruen’s plans the end of their livelihood, alongside influential anticommunist Texans who saw red at the thought of anything that might be called central planning.⁸

While Gruen had become one of the preeminent designers of capitalist utopias—shopping malls that transformed the commercial landscape—he was also one of postwar America’s most pie-in-the-sky dreamers. *1976*, for which Gruen developed extensive materials but which was exposed to the public only once, when it was brought dramatically to life as a one-hour NBC television program, took some of the ideas in the Fort Worth Plan even farther, visualizing an entire world remade by beneficent technology.⁹ This urban technophilic future, in which cities have become organized, pleasant places that are dense with interesting activity yet free from traffic congestion, was nothing less than an updated visualization of the “world of tomorrow” shown in Bel Geddes’s 1939 pavilion. *1976* with its cellular form, clear separation of uses, and complete reconstruction of existing urban environments is a direct forerunner of Gruen’s world’s fair plan.¹⁰

The need for total spatial (and by extension behavioral) control had become increasingly important to Gruen, who in Southdale and Fort Worth had seen his ideals corrupted by market forces and political maneuvering—nemeses he believed he could circumvent only by controlling a project from the very first and mandating its form and development. The *1976* vision did not focus on the processes of transformation—how contingent and

multijurisdictional cities would become clean and orderly places of technological wonder—but on the end result. Unsurprisingly, few seemed inspired by it—the *New York Times* review of the program called it “an elaborate bore.”¹¹ Gruen needed a venue for his cluster of ideas that would be neither dependent on the demands of the private sector (as Southdale was) nor subject to local influence (as in Fort Worth); he needed a large, special purpose authority and effectively a blank canvas. How could he not take on a world’s fair? Ada Louise Huxtable wrote that it provided exactly what Gruen had long sought, “an unparalleled opportunity to avoid the familiar traps, pitfalls, and frustrations of uncontrolled, haphazard growth.”¹²

Gruen’s world’s fair proposal took shape in 1959, at the request of the District of Columbia’s Board of Trade. There was consensus in architectural circles at the time that restaging the 1939 fair was not enough and that the entire “tired institution” of the fair needed to be rethought.¹³ Even the New York fair proposal put forth a creation radically different from what eventually took shape.¹⁴ Gruen went all the farther in both scale and complexity, basing his designs on his cellular plans for 1976 and other model communities, which he later detailed in his book *The Heart of Our Cities* (1964). A 600-acre pedestrian-only core of exhibition buildings and linking platforms in a park was to be surrounded by parking and other transportation connections (Fig. 1), which themselves would be surrounded by 4,500 acres of preserved open land—this compared with a total of 550 acres for the whole New York fair.¹⁵ The core area would be arranged on two levels, so that the exhibits were above the systems that supported them, making for easier visitor circulation. This separation of uses by level was reminiscent of the world of 1960 brought to life at the end of the 1939 GM pavilion, and the focus on flow and congestion was derived from that fair as well: Gruen had noted at the time, “the directing of the traffic flow is one of the problems every world’s fair exhibition had had to deal with and the methods found there should be utilized.”¹⁶

After the fair, the core would be repurposed as a new downtown, with some buildings such as the hospital retaining their functions and others—such as the fair administration facility, which was to become a municipal building—taking on new ones (Fig. 2). Dense apartment structures would go up in the core area, with less dense housing built on some of the parking areas, which would not be needed after the fair closed. The outer, preserved land would gradually be given over to new facilities, corporate sites, and other community needs. The eventual town was to be 6,000 acres and host a population of 100,000, all around the transportation core—not unlike the nearby New Deal planned community of Greenbelt.

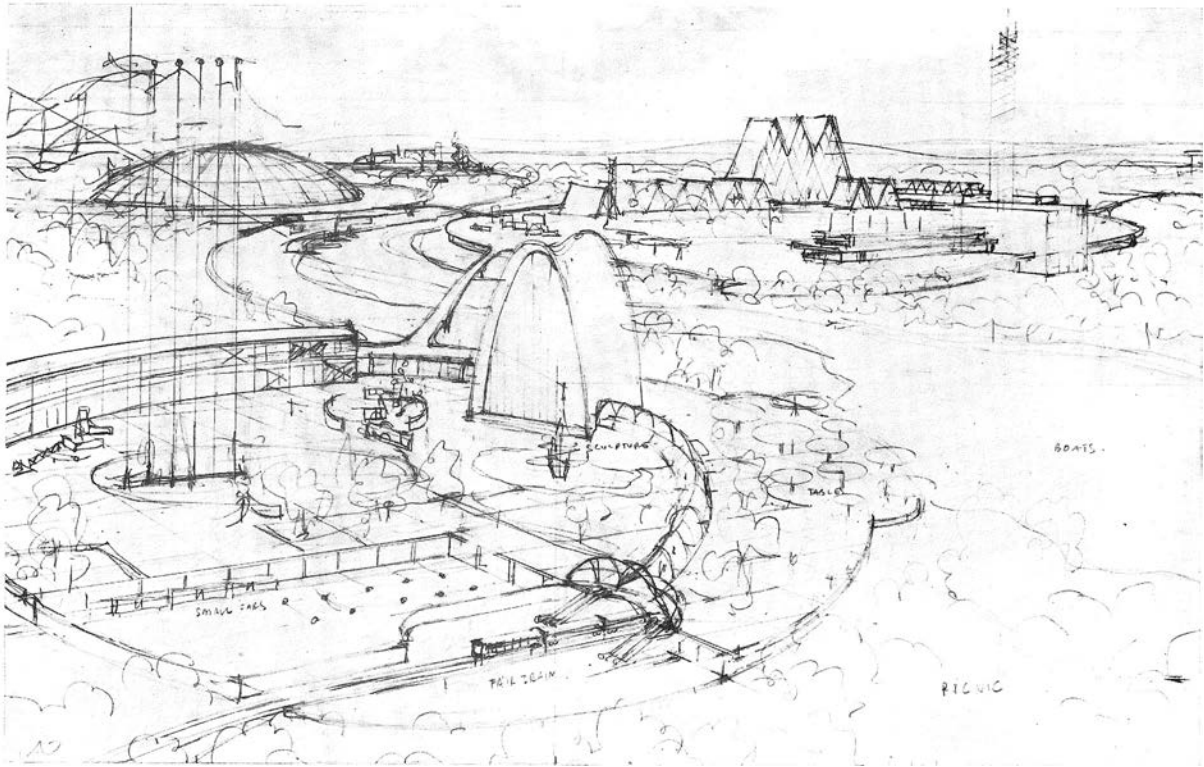


Figure 1. A rendering of the core area of the fair.

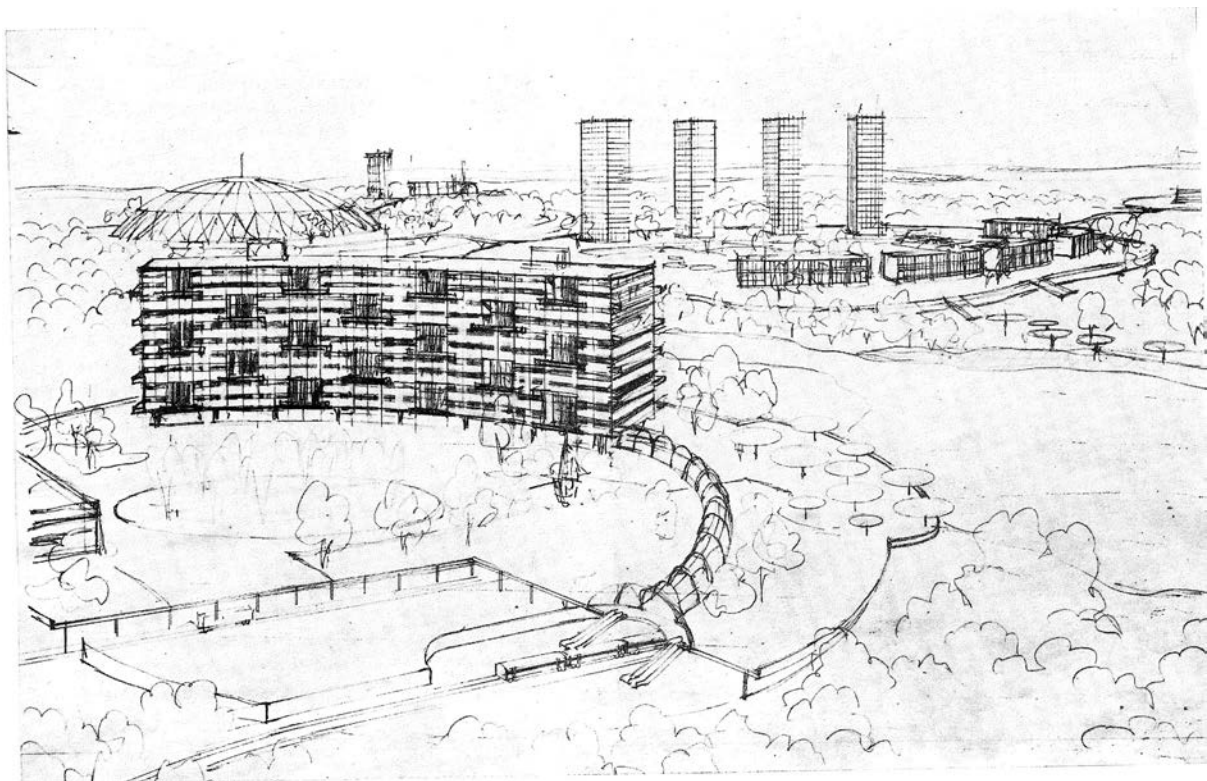


Figure 2. The same area, transformed into a town.

Beyond preplanned housing, the site was also to contain a permanent International Trade and Development Center, as well as some entertainment amenities—making the town a clear forerunner not only of the “new towns” that were soon to be developed but of the

urban environments developed in the 1970s and beyond by spectacle-driven developers.¹⁷ In essence, Gruen prefigured not only the planned community of Columbia, Maryland, but Baltimore's Harborplace and Boston's Faneuil Hall Marketplace.¹⁸ Gruen projected the costs of this epic transformation to be relatively reasonable, but this was obviously an undertaking with few if any precedents.

Gruen claimed to envision the new town as a laboratory, rather than as a fully programmed site, writing that the project "will constitute a model city from which important lessons for planning and government can be derived."¹⁹ Yet it is clear from his earlier work and from his lamentations in the press that Gruen saw central control and a master agenda as critical to bringing about the community he wanted. In 1956, a *New Yorker* correspondent wrote of Gruen, "When we brought up the question of city planning, Mr. Gruen grumbled that 'planning' has become a dirty word in this country. 'Almost as bad as if Lenin had invented it.'"²⁰ While Gruen's work was derailed or corrupted as much by local economic self-interest as by fear of central planning, central planning's reputation had nevertheless worsened in the intervening years with the dawn of the revolts against inner-city highways and Title I housing projects. With his world's fair, Gruen was advocating central control at the cusp of an era that rejected state authority over a wide swath of development, housing, and community issues. "To Gruen and other professionals," wrote Huxtable, "the life, liberty, and salvation of the city depend on its control." Yet like so many of his peers, Gruen held a relatively constricted view of human nature, showing little concern for what different kinds of people might want from a town, since he believed that a humane and pleasant environment would by definition provide an open realm for the pursuit of individual dreams and desires. Still, it is almost certain that the resulting community would not have turned out as he envisioned.

As hard to credit as Gruen's dream of converting the fair to a town may have been, the prerequisite of a central planning and design authority—and the avoidance of conventional systems of government—itsself prefigured later significant developments in town design. One planner called the Fort Worth plan "the only unborn child who has produced hundreds of grandchildren," and something similar can be said of this plan.²¹

Gruen's world's fair was essentially a giant transit-oriented development, *avant la lettre*, although on a broader scale than most seen today, which do not stretch to include every possible community function in a single development. Certainly his desire to make cities more pedestrian-friendly resonates today, as does his relatively compact style of development. It is easy as well to see the lineage of the kind of controlled community Gruen imagined in various New Urbanist master planned communities, although Gruen's focus was on the community systems as a whole, not on the quality of the social community or on aesthetic concerns, both of which figure more prominently in New Urbanist developments.

Gruen's proposed reuse of the fair site was far more extensive than anything seen up to that time, although every fair had its iconic remnants. His reuse was focused not on monuments, however, but on the physical form and the underlying systems. Such recycling finds more simpatico descendants today in various programs that support adaptive reuse of former industrial buildings and sites. Still, those sorts of conversion tend to be after the fact; no one builds a factory intending for it to become lofts. Gruen's sensibility might be called cradle-to-cradle, in contemporary terms, as one form was to give way to another that was notably more sustainable and designed for long-term efficiency than any of the other more sprawling suburban communities taking shape at the time.

That said, some of the same criticisms that have been brought to bear on transit-oriented developments and New Urbanist communities can be seen to apply to Gruen's plan as well—principally the need for a high level of compliance from the users of the sites. All these locations are designed for and appeal to a certain kind of socially constituted individual—one who is presumed to share the designer's values and to be complicit with aesthetic and social norms, such as the intrinsic value of private property or the need to restrict "clutter". That what results are "better communities" is a sentiment held in high regard, but the definition of "better" often turns out to have a very narrow compass.

Whatever the merits of Gruen's plan, it could have set a new standard for what fairs should strive for—aiming at more than sheer spectacle and the usual "parade of nations"—and it might have hastened the introduction of some planning and community development concepts that otherwise did not take hold until decades later.

By November 1959, it was clear that Gruen had lost out to the New York team, at least in part because of its greater skill at political maneuvering, but also perhaps because that team proposed a more traditional fair.²² Gruen did not go entirely quietly, as in effect he tried to hijack the New York fair with a 1960 proposal for a pavilion there entitled "The World of Tomorrow" (although he noted, "We are using this phrase as a working title, to be replaced ultimately by one with a fresher sound").²³ This proposal was essentially 1976 all over again, taking twenty to thirty acres (perhaps "in the center of Meadow Lake on stilts which would carry a large platform") to demonstrate the possibilities of better urban organization. This project, too, was proposed to outlive the rest of the fair. In a description that reveals either a complete lack of imagination or a pointed attempt to appeal to what he saw as the retrograde sensibilities of the New York organizers, Gruen suggested that much of the exhibit be an explicit recapitulation of 1939's Futurama, with moving chairs, audio commentary, and a flyover view of the different types of land use that would exist in the world of tomorrow. Perhaps unsurprisingly, this proposal was also not pursued.

¹Extensive materials on Gruen's proposal are in Boxes 9 and 39, Victor Gruen Papers, accession no. 5809, American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming, Laramie (hereafter VGP), quoted with permission.

²See, e.g., Thomas H. Creighton, "P.S.," *Progressive Architecture* 42 (July 1961): 206.

³"Biographical Data", p. 2, in folder "Biographical Information, Victor Gruen, 1903-1980," in Box 3, VGP.

⁴Gruen insisted he did not know about Howard's work when designing his shockingly similar cellular communities. See Victor Gruen, *The Heart of Our Cities: The Urban Crisis, Diagnosis and Cure* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1964), 283-86. On Southdale's utopianism, see Timothy Mennel, "Victor Gruen and the Construction of Cold-War Utopias," *Journal of Planning History* (Spring 2004): 116-50.

⁵"To the pioneers of 1976," Gruen wrote in a memo, "I am sitting in my office waiting to be swamped with dreamy ideas, inquiries and brainstorm." Victor Gruen to Those Concerned, July 27, 1955, in "Correspondence Professional" folder, Box 52, VGP. See also "Design Conference '1976,'" July 23, 1955, and "'1976' Design Conference," July 30, 1955, both in "'1976' Design Conference" folder, Box 15, VGP.

⁶Gruen's plan is well situated in the planning-theory continuum in D. R. Hill, "Sustainability, Victor Gruen, and the Cellular Metropolis," *Journal of the American Planning Association* 58.3 (1992): 312-26.

⁷Paul Rabinow, "On the Archaeology of Late Modernity," in *NowHere: Space, Time, and Modernity*, ed. Roger Friedland and Deirdre Boden (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1994), 403.

⁸Robert B. Fairbanks, "The Good Government Machine: The Citizens Charter Association and Dallas Politics, 1930-1960," in *Essays on Sunbelt Cities and Recent Urban America*, ed. Robert B. Fairbanks and Kathleen Underwood (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1990), 140, 142.

⁹*1976; Your World of Tomorrow*, NBC, October 9, 1955; copy in the Motion Picture and Television Reading Room, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. A description of the depicted locations is in "Television Show 1976 Listing of Scenes," August 22, 1955, in "Professional Files 1955" folder, Box 33, VGP.

¹⁰For further description, see "'1976' Rough Outline of Ideas," in "'1976' Design Conference" folder, Box 15, VGP.

¹¹"Spiritless '76: Life May Be Revolutionary 21 Years Hence, but on Channel 4 It Was Dull," *The New York Times*, October 10, 1955, p. 52.

¹²Ada Louise Huxtable, "Out of a Fair, a City," *Horizon* (May 1960): 84.

¹³*Ibid.*, p. 80.

¹⁴See Ursula Cliff, "Fair and Square," *Industrial Design* 8 (March 1961): 43. When the more innovative design was rejected in favor of a design based on that of the 1939 fair, the design committee resigned en masse, with Gordon Bunshaft saying, "We were trying to design a plan that would be an expression of our times. . . . Why should architects hang around four years beating an old cat?"

¹⁵Allan Keller, "A Noted Planner Urges: Let's Make Our Fairs Permanent Cities," *New York World-Telegram and Sun*, June 11, 1960.

¹⁶"Face to Face," *Apparel Arts* (June 1940): 52-55.

¹⁷Gruen, *Heart of Our Cities*, 294-95; see also Huxtable, "Out of a Fair, a City," 86-87.

¹⁸Columbia began to take shape in 1962. Irvine, California—designed by Gruen’s Los Angeles rival William L. Pereira—was an almost immediate contemporary, with master planning for more than a university campus beginning there in October 1959. See Ann Forsyth, *Reforming Suburbia: The Planned Communities of Irvine, Columbia, and the Woodlands* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2005), Chapters 2 and 3.

¹⁹Quoted in Huxtable, “Out of a Fair, a City,” 85.

²⁰“Talk of the Town,” *The New Yorker*, March 17, 1956.

²¹Quoted in Victor Gruen, *Centers for the Urban Environment: Survival of the Cities* (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1973), 192. On some of these “grandchildren,” see D. Haimbach, “The Fresno Mall,” *The American City* (April 1965): 91–93.

²²Cliff, “Fair and Square,” 40. See also “Ike’s Advisers Hold Key to U.S. Fair Bids,” *The Washington Post*, October 25, 1959, A17.

²³Victor Gruen, “Idea Outline: New York World’s Fair Exhibit, ‘The City of Tomorrow,’” [marked in pencil “late 1960 bet Aug + Oct”], in Box 23, VGP.

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ARTS, ENTERTAINMENT & MEDIA PAVILION

SECTION 6



6.1.

The Theatre Culture of United States International Expositions, 1876-1893

Robert Davis

Between 1876 and 1893, world's fair organizers, officials, and boosters encouraged visitors to distinguish between the work of touring an exposition and the diversions offered by popular entertainments. Their arguments, presented in magazines, newspapers, and guidebooks, generated a discourse that aligned the content of expositions with an evolutionary idea of history. Here, the contemporary West was positioned at the pinnacle of civilization. Officials encouraged visitors to embody this ideal by performing their roles as fairgoers in a rational, orderly manner, dedicated to learning rather than amusement. The *Guide to New Orleans and the Principal Cities in the South* (1885) is typical when it admonishes that "the individual who studies not [...] and ignores valuable improvements constantly going on about him day by day [...] is [the one] who gets left in the race for competence and comfort."¹ The guidebook suggests that the way to counter this process is to eschew pure entertainment, as "rest need not be idleness," and instead to study the exposition. Despite this uplifting rhetoric, popular performance played a key role in late nineteenth-century American world's fairs.

In this chapter, I look at the relationship between performance inside and outside exposition walls at the Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition (1876), the New Orleans World's Industrial and Cotton Centennial Exposition (1884-1885), and the Chicago World's Columbian Exposition (1893). In particular, I consider how themes and sights from expositions were represented on stage and how performative displays infiltrated fairs between 1876 and 1893. This chapter seeks to revise histories of amusement zones by acknowledging that the cultures of expositions were porous, shaping the theatre of host cities even while being shaped by a pervasive theatrical sensibility. As the period went on, theatrical productions in host cities became progressively integral to the visitors who toured expositions. In 1876, only a handful of plays in Philadelphia theatres touched on themes related to the exposition, but by 1893 producers eagerly courted fairgoers by offering mass spectacles that seemed like extensions of the Columbian Exposition. Meanwhile, expositions themselves staged increasingly theatrical exhibits, whether it was on the pleasurable Chicago Midway or in the serious-minded Machinery Hall.

The essay surveys advertisements, playbills, guidebooks, and reviews to construct a representative look at what local theatres were producing during exposition seasons. While famous actors such as Edwin Booth and James O'Neill flocked to the cities to play their standard roles, I will focus on how spectacular entertainments, an emergent theatrical form in 1876, grew into a dominant mode of entertainment by 1893. As expositions grew in size and scope, theatrical spectacles likewise increased in scale.² My main examples include the Kiralfy Brothers' *Around the World in Eighty Days* (Philadelphia and New Orleans), "Buffalo Bill's Wild West" (New Orleans and Chicago), and Imre Kiralfy's *America* (Chicago). I use diaries and letters to suggest that fairgoers saw both the exposition on stage and the stage in the exposition. While the standard historical narrative discusses "lowbrow" entertainment as being only reluctantly incorporated into "highbrow" expositions, I argue that a broad range of performances was always part of exposition culture. Robert Rydell, for example, claims the 1893 Chicago World's Columbian Exposition was the first American fair where "designers found a way to incorporate popular amusements into the ideological framework of the fair."³ This claim, however, ignores performances occurring in major halls in pre-1893 expositions.

1876 AND THE "CENTENNIAL CITY"

In 1876, Centennial Exhibition officials strove to exclude popular entertainment from within the fair walls, but their effort did very little to ensure that amusements were not part of the fair experience. Historians often confirm official discourse with their interpretations of the "Centennial City," a swath of hastily constructed hotels, saloons, restaurants, and theatrical showplaces located just outside the Exhibition gates. This area, also known as "Shantytown" or "Dinkeytown," is likened to a proto-Midway of cheap entertainments that were rejected by exposition officials (Fig. 1). Although the "Centennial City" included a major transportation hub and several fine hotels, historians have defined the site by its most garish entertainments, often relying on a condescending description of the area from *Harper's Weekly*:

A row of wooden buildings used for variety shows, concert halls, liquor saloons, and the like. Here in rival establishments were the "learned pig," the gigantic fat woman, the two-legged horse, the five-legged cow, the mysterious ghost, and any number of other curiosities for the edification or amusement of the passing stranger.⁴

The picture here is of a confusing—and confused—jumble of cheap sideshows lurking just outside the exposition and feeding, vampire-like, on fairgoers when more respectable venues were closed.

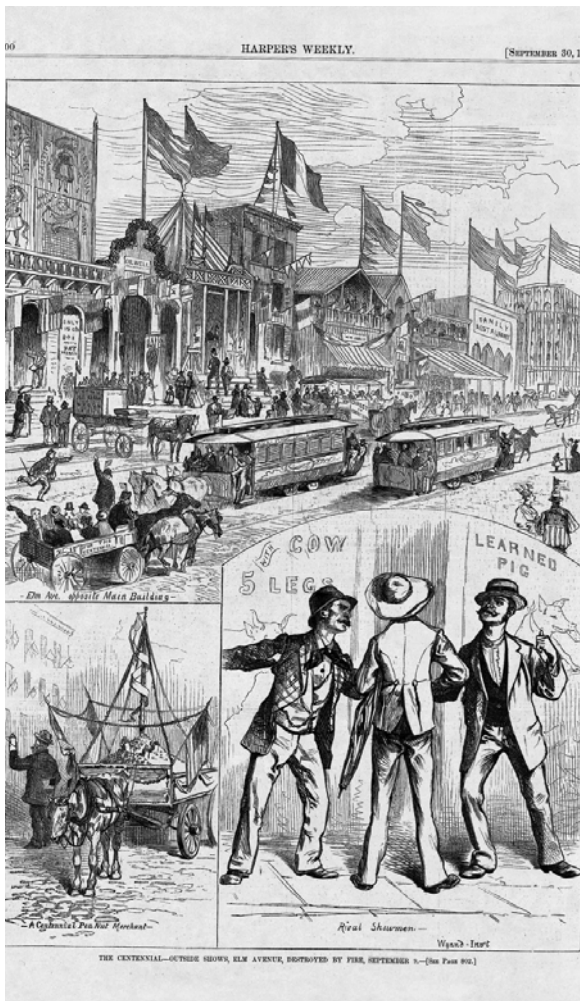


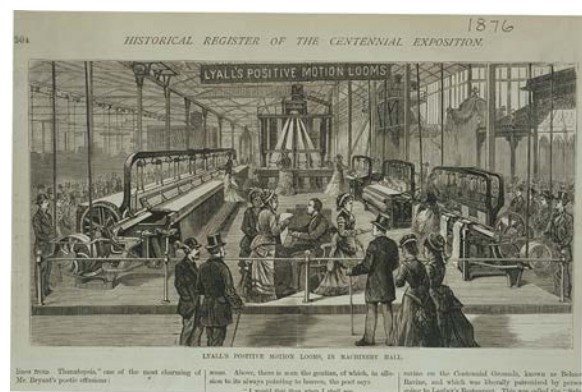
Figure 1. Despite Harper's Weekly's derogatory tone, this image shows not only attractions like the Learned Pig (a pig trained to choose a card out of a deck) but also respectable entertainments like a model oil well and panorama of Paris.

Despite the rhetorical difference between the exhibition and “Centennial City,” the experiences available in both offered astonishing similarities.⁵ In contrast to Harper's portrait, other sources reveal a range of concessions along Elm Avenue. James McCabe's *Illustrated History of the Centennial Exhibition* spends more time on sites such as the “Pennsylvania Oil Well,” a functioning scale oil well.⁶ Rather than appeal to low tastes, the well is hardly different in tone from one of the forty exhibitors in the Mining Machinery and Drills section in Machinery Hall.⁷ The commercial display of the Oil Well's proximity to a dime museum, variety halls, and fancy hotels suggests that the “Centennial City” was not merely a conglomerate of coarse entertainments, but a vibrant cultural zone.

Displaying the recent advances of technological society, the exhibition's Machinery Hall housed working looms, boilers, presses, drills, and candy-making machines, to name a few. Although considered “an educator of the masses,” it, like the Centennial City, was more of a zone of mixed use than historians have acknowledged.⁸ Amid the so-called serious exhibits was a busy performance culture that defies the neatness of the official line between popular entertainment and education, showing that one could find flamboyant showmanship and theatricality as much in the hallowed halls of machinery as outside the gates.

Figure 2. From Frank Leslie's *Historical Register of the Centennial Exposition*. Working looms would be a popular attraction in expositions of the period, with spectators lining up to see the operatives at work. Potter's refers to these exhibits as equal in importance to locomotives (233).

Machines were often shown in motion by costumed “operators” (Fig. 2). One such concession belonged Reuben McChesney, also known as the “Mohawk Dutchman.” Costumed in clothes made from wood,



McChesney, who would dominate the competitive band-sawying circuit into the 1880s, provided an inherently theatrical exhibit, as he reportedly “drew crowds with his tricks with the band saw, sometimes pretending to lose fingers in accidental amputations. He had no trouble selling the furniture and other articles he created.”⁹

A later article recounts McChesney’s standard act as progressing from making four miniature chairs that could balance on a pencil to trimming his nails on the running saw.¹⁰ Just as the Oil Well was nestled among dime museums and variety houses, McChesney’s booth was located in the area for scroll saw and wood-jointing machines, and was described as including “Process shown,” a gloss on what was a common performative practice across the Centennial Grounds.¹¹

Despite the rhetoric that presented sightseeing as civilizing work, the exhibition’s concessions adopted widespread theatrical strategies. For example, the “Kindergarten Cottage” offered a model kindergarten in action where spectators sat in bleachers to observe teachers in action. In the “Hunter’s Camp,” several costumed hunters lived in makeshift cabins, demonstrating how frontiersmen slept and ate in the wild.¹² Lowbrow theatre was also present on the grounds: visitors dining in the “Restaurant of the South” could find “an ‘old Plantation Darky Band’” playing and “illustrat[ing] Southern plantation scenes.”¹³ For something more exotic, the Tunisian Café included girls engaged in the orientalized “scarf dance.”¹⁴ Acts like these reveal an exposition dependent upon—rather than opposed to—popular entertainment and performance. From 1876 to 1893, the frequency and scale of such performative encounters would increase dramatically.

AROUND THE WORLD IN EIGHTY DAYS

In 1876, Philadelphia theatres attempted to capture the influx of visitors largely by presenting audience-pleasing plays. Meanwhile, the ever-entrepreneurial Kiralfy Brothers cannily sought to capitalize on the taste for spectacle that fairs offered by bringing their latest hit, *Around the World in Eighty Days*, to Philadelphia for the Centennial season.

Imre and Bolossy Kiralfy were accomplished Hungarian folk dancers who immigrated to New York, where they developed their entrepreneurial acumen. After restaging an 1873 revival of the blockbuster *Black Crook*, which ran for over one hundred nights, the brothers created large-scale touring shows throughout the 1880s. Bolossy Kiralfy would later write that between 1872 and 1893, the brothers “took up the task of converting American theatre audiences into enthusiasts for the French style of musical spectacle.”¹⁵ While the Kiralfy Brothers were crafting dance pieces of increasing complexity, exposition planners were striving to surpass the scale of previous fairs. Just as expositions enlisted spectacle to overwhelm the spectator, Kiralfy productions traded on visual excess in their scale, costumes, scenery, and vast numbers of extras on stage.¹⁶

In advance of the exhibition, the Kiralfy Brothers built a new theatre on Broad Street opposite the distinguished Academy of Music and constructed in “Moorish style.” They named it “Kiralfy’s Alhambra Palace,” with the express purpose of using it to revive their hit, *Around the World in Eighty Days*. Billed as “the spectacular masterpiece of the present century,” *Around the World* uses Phileas Fogg’s journey as a pretext to present exotic sights like a live elephant, a sinking boat, a flying balloon, and over one hundred ballet dancers in a variety of scenes, including Calcutta, Borneo, and Egypt. The piece played at the Alhambra throughout the Exhibition, with ads that (perhaps exaggeratedly) warned eager ticket buyers that it was sold out two weeks in advance.¹⁷ A *Philadelphia Inquirer* article about touring the fair entitled “Around the World in Eighty Days, or Around the Ground in twenty-eight minutes” shows how audience members were encouraged to compare what they saw within the Exposition and on the stage.¹⁸

After the fair, *Around the World* closed. The Alhambra soon reopened with the “Lyric Fairy Spectacle” *Azurine, or, a Voyage to the Earth*; however ticket sales were poor, and the brothers quickly sold the theatre. They returned to touring their spectacular pageants, including *Black Crook* and *Around the World*, both of which would be brought to New Orleans during the 1884-85 Exposition.

In her study of spectatorship and museum design, Alison Griffiths points out that for museum and exposition designers of the period, “the central challenge lay in striking the proper balance between popular appeal and scientific rigor.”¹⁹ While exposition planners struggled to claim the educational side of that balance, fairgoers encountered expositions in a more fluid, unrefined way. In Philadelphia, the popular, temporary amusements—rather than the “legitimate theatres”—held the closest connections to the theatricality of the expositions. In New Orleans, however, with the return of the Kiralfy Brothers and the introduction of Buffalo Bill’s “Wild West,” theatrical spectacle and expositions became further intertwined.

NEW ORLEANS: BUFFALO BILL’S “WILD WEST”

The 1884-1885 New Orleans World’s Industrial and Cotton Centennial Exposition celebrated the first shipment of cotton from American to England. Its more practical purpose was to generate investment in local industries by showing off advancements in the post-Reconstruction South; the *New Orleans Daily Picayune* wrote, “the object of the Exposition, *par excellence* [...] is to induce solid investments, and to attract a desirable class of immigrants.”²⁰ Marked by labor unrest, an economic bust, poor attendance, and gross mismanagement, this exposition usually receives only a passing mention in histories of American fairs. While it was celebrated for its landscaping, the Exposition made less money and attracted fewer visitors than the other fairs of the period. The New Orleans theatre during the exposition, however, not only brought in the Kiralfy Brothers, but also attracted Buffalo Bill, whose Wild West show was just beginning to emerge as a new performance form.

William “Buffalo Bill” Cody was a soldier, scout, hunter, and icon of frontier culture. Although he is known for his “Wild West,” Cody began his entertainment career as a melodramatic actor, appearing in *Scouts of the Prairie* (1872). In 1883, Cody formed the first “Wild West,” a variety show that featured horse races, shooting displays, Native American war dances, and staged skirmishes.²¹ By the end of the century, Cody had made himself a household name, bringing the “Wild West” across the country and throughout Europe. At the time of the New Orleans fair, however, he was still a struggling showman hoping to capitalize on the exposition’s crowds.

Cody’s fortunes suffered the same setbacks as the fair itself. A streetcar operators’ strike limited the audiences he could attract, and weather forced him to cancel numerous shows. The “Wild West” was intended to be staged outdoors every day in Oakland Park, but its opening was delayed due to rain, which turned the performance area into a muddy soup—a common complaint from exhibition visitors about the whole site of the fair. One historian counted that the Wild West was canceled forty-four times during its Exposition season, a heavy burden for a show of this scale.²² Not content to count his losses, Cody turned to the theatre. His company took an engagement at the St. Charles Theatre, where Cody opened with the melodrama *The Prairie Waif* on 18 January, 1885, and performed alternatively with his Wild West show through the winter, reportedly to full houses. Cody’s recourse to the theatre enabled his troupe to survive the financial disaster of the winter weather. When he left New Orleans in April, he was an unqualified success, infused with cash and poised to expand the show to an even larger scale.

AROUND THE WORLD RETURNS

In contrast to Philadelphia in 1876, the New Orleans theatre community positioned itself to be a part of the life of the fair. More theatres were listed in guidebooks, and several offered special expositions “season” packages. Again, the Kiralfy Brothers featured prominently. Since the Centennial, the Kiralfy Brothers had been building an empire of touring productions. Rather than become attached to New Orleans, they brought a rapid-fire succession of large-scale spectacles to the city. Many theatres in New Orleans reported success during the exposition, but no one came close to the Kiralfy Brothers. They opened December 7th at the St. Charles with *Around the World in Eighty Days*, which was quickly followed by *Black Crook*, and, finally, *Sieba and the Seven Ravens*, which opened January 4th, with the *New Orleans Daily Picayune* consistently reporting capacity crowds throughout each performance.

New Orleans seemed in greater awe of visiting entertainment than its own local theatre. The *Daily Picayune* called *Sieba* “the grandest thing New Orleans has seen in a long time.” More telling is that the critics saw both the exotic Kiralfy productions and Buffalo Bill’s “Wild West” as parts of the Exposition experience. Compare the *Daily Picayune*’s comment that “*Around the World in Eighty Days* is regarded by strangers as part of the exposition” and “this is education, instruction, and amusement[...]Buffalo Bill’s Wild West Show is an exposition in itself.”²⁴ While the connection linking spectacular entertainments to

expositions was only beginning to take hold in 1884, it would become more explicit in 1893, when both Chicago's exposition and its theatres would unite in a mission to impress visitors with the grandeur of their artistic and technological achievements.

THE COLUMBIAN EXPOSITION AND THE WILD WEST SENSATION

Between 1885 and 1893, the Kiralfy Brothers had parted ways while Buffalo Bill had become an international sensation. With the Columbian Exposition as the largest world's fair to date, the Chicago theatrical community jumped at the chance to attract the millions who were expected to visit in the summer of 1893. Although major stars such as Henry Irving and Ellen Terry took up residence to play through their repertory, it was the big spectacles that enjoyed lasting success. Here, I will look at Buffalo Bill's "Wild West," Imre Kiralfy's *America*, and compare them to performances in major Exposition halls.

Between the New Orleans and Chicago Exposition, Cody's "Wild West" underwent two major changes. In 1886, Cody employed the help of innovative producer and director Steele Mackaye to transform his show into *The Drama of Civilization*. While *The Drama* incorporated the riding, shooting, and acts from the "Wild West," it crafted them into a narrative that followed the development of the American frontier in a series of "Epochs," beginning in the "Primeval Forest" and ending in a "Mining Camp." Second, the Wild West arrived at the Exposition after having toured Europe between 1887 and 1892, where Cody played for eager publics of all classes across the continent. These tours, which honed the "Wild West" show's publicity and production departments, brought a polished show with a cohesive narrative to the Exposition in Chicago.

Although Cody's business partner originally wanted to install the show on the Chicago Midway, he had to settle for a spot just outside of the fair gates. Here, the "Wild West" set up camp for the season. The show, which incorporated elements from the *Drama of Civilization* without a strict narrative, including so-called authentic reenactments of events like The Battle of Little Big Horn, played to six million spectators.²⁵ Cody was, in the words of a *New York Times* review, "coining money near the fair grounds" by presenting a spectacular show with melodramatic elements that claimed to have real historical significance.²⁶

KIRALFY'S AMERICA

After the Kiralfy Brothers dissolved their partnership in the 1880s, Bolossy struggled, while Imre had a hit with *Nero*, for which he built a special theatre on Staten Island in New York. Although thousands attended the show in 1887, the most important visitor was perhaps P.T. Barnum, who, then near the end of his life, was co-producing Barnum and Bailey's Circus. Barnum asked Kiralfy to adapt *Nero* to accompany the circus on a European tour. Later, Kiralfy wrote a "circus spec" for performance in Chicago in 1892 and 1893. Entitled *Columbus and the Discovery of America*, it presented the story of the discovery of America in a circus format, in a year celebrating the four hundredth anniversary of Columbus' voyage. It was produced in New York, and again in Chicago, but left Chicago before the Exposition,

as Bailey feared that the fair would compete with the circus' audience.²⁷ Kiralfy however, like Cody, remained and put on a new show.

In April 1893, Kiralfy's *America* opened to inaugurate what the *New York Times* referred to as "the world's fair period in Chicago theatricals."²⁸ Even by Kiralfy's standards, *America* was a tremendous undertaking. With a cast in the hundreds, the pageant was so large that the *Times* could confidently state, "it is safe to say that no such spectacle was ever attempted in this country."²⁹ Told in a prologue and three acts, *America* followed allegorical figures such as Progress and Peace through the history of the country from its beginnings to the present day.



Figure 3. Poster advertising the finale of *America*'s second act, which includes the entrances of figures such as Education, Knowledge, Architecture, Poetry, Music, Perseverance, Invention, Physics, and many more, culminating the Grand Ballet of Arts and Sciences.

America not only shared the celebratory rhetoric of the Exposition, but also put the fair on stage. The final act began with the "Grand Ballet of Historical Inventions," a set piece with dancers costumed as famous inventions throughout American history, such as Morse's Electric Telegraph, Electric Light, Bell's Telephone, and McCormick's Reaper. In many cases, the actual artifact was also on view in the Exposition's halls. The finale was a *pièce de résistance* of staging as well as homage to the exposition itself. The location of the ballet shifted to the fair's Administration Building, where a "Congregation of Nations, and Grant Cortège of the States and Territories of the Union" (including the Queen of Asia, the African Queen and representations of the countries present at the fair), was greeted by the Goddess of Chicago and welcomed to the Columbian Exposition. According to the script, in this "ALLEGORY OF THE COLUMBIAN WORLD'S FAIR [...] All representatives from all parts of the globe pay HOMAGE TO AMERICAN GENIUS."³⁰

In June, two months after opening, a *Times* piece claimed *America* was "at the summit of its growth," but the spectacle enjoyed a seven-month run in total.³¹ Originally intending to end it in September, the producers extended it into the winter season. Afterwards, when it headed to the Northeast, it was condensed to a touring piece, playing to rave reviews at venues such as the Metropolitan Opera House. If there was any concern before 1893 that large-scale entertainments would be eclipsed by world's fairs, Buffalo Bill's "Wild West" and Kiralfy's *America* confirmed that spectacular entertainments were a part of, rather than in competition with, exposition cultures.

THE WHITE CITY VERSUS THE MIDWAY

There has been a wealth of scholarship devoted to studying ethnographic performances in the Chicago Midway Plaisance, a zone of assorted concessions and theatres.³² As many have noted, entertainments were officially segregated to the Midway, but, as with the Philadelphia Centennial, the sanctified halls of the White City were no less theatrical than the nearby amusement zones. Nowhere was the entertainment/educational divide so

distinct as in the manner in which official voices attempted to separate the viewing the White City as “serious” work, while casting the Midway Plaisance as a diversion. In *Whose Fair?*, historian James Gilbert shows that fair guidebooks consistently offered itineraries that encouraged the spectators to spend the bulk of their time in the White City and look at the Midway only on the last day, as a way to rest before returning home.³³ As before, exhibitors continued to employ theatrical tactics to craft performances to attract spectators. For example, while Rossiter Johnson’s *A History of the World’s Columbian Exposition* deems the machinery in operation in Machinery Hall “a great educational feature” that might be considered “a grand training school” for visitors, it should be noted that several theatrical displays proved particularly popular to fairgoers and critics.³⁴ The Jacquard Looms exhibit, for example, employed an actor dressed in a “native” Turkish costume, who, with “true oriental deliberation” made towels by hand. Next to this display, the company’s automated loom demonstrated its efficiency by exponentially outpacing his manual efforts.³⁵

One visitor’s diary offers a typical response to the necessity, rather than rarity, of theatrical display within exhibition halls. A Chicago-area teacher, Adelaide Evenden, visited the fair in June with her parents, making several trips to the White City and Midway. In one entry, she notes that:

Beyond this building is Machinery hall. Here we tried to ‘do’ (a word very commonly used at the Fair) two aisles. Many of the machines were unintelligible to us and consequently uninteresting, but when the machinery was in motion and especially at work, we were much entertained and instructed.³⁶

Days later, Evenden returned to marvel at working exhibits such as a telegraph machine, the Willamatic Thread Company’s looms, and a model kitchen, where she marveled at “a roast which had been cooked by electricity—no smoke and dirt.” Despite a rigorous official discourse separating the entertaining and the educational, in practice fairgoers flocked to the more theatrical exhibits, just as they steadily attended the exposition-themed performances outside the fair walls.

CONCLUSION: PANORAMAS, DIME MUSEUMS, AND TOURISM

While expositions and theatres shared a common culture of performance, world’s fairs and popular culture shared a deeper relationship than this chapter can encompass. On 4 June 1893, the *New York Times* noted, “the special attractions which have sprung into being through the influence of the World’s Fair are being steadily increased by newcomers.” These included panoramas, dime museums, and vaudeville shows that offered vistas of other worlds and exotic sights, as did the expositions. Evidence suggests that fairgoers encountered these venues as part of the experience of attending an exposition.

Two panoramas played throughout the Philadelphia Centennial: “Paris by Night” was shown at the Coliseum next to Kiralfy’s Alhambra on Broad Street, while “The Siege of Paris” was presented in an identical building in the “Centennial City” (visible in Fig. 1).³⁷ While these

were firmly part of the culture of the host city during the exposition, a panorama of the Battle of Gettysburg was also on display just outside of the New Orleans Exposition's gates.

Although fine art and historical museums were emergent institutions between 1876 and 1893, the term museum most regularly denoted dime museums and middle class showplaces like Barnum's American Museum or Moses Kimball's Boston Museum, where visitors could see a mix of sideshow entertainment, historical artifacts, and respectable theatre or lectures. Museums such as Wood's in Philadelphia and Chicago and Robinson's Dime Museum in New Orleans offered this mix of respectable and dubious entertainment with increasing popularity. Fairgoer itineraries and diaries suggest that many attended both exposition and dime museum with equal interest. For example, fifteen-year-old John Lunneen kept a detailed record of everything that he saw in a short visit to the Columbian Exposition. His notebooks do not distinguish sights inside the fair and Wood's Museums or the Wild West show outside the fair. On a Monday, Lunneen visited various State Buildings within the Fair and on Tuesday, saw the opera *Ali Baba* and went to Wood's Museum, where he saw "a woman 8ft 4in tall. A black bear. An Indian woman and baby. A young fawn. Aztec Indian mummies[sic]. Large snakes. Invisible lady. Wax figures" before returning to the fair the next morning.³⁸ Florence Dymond, the daughter of prominent Louisiana planter John Dymond, sent a series of letters home to her father from the Columbian Exposition that are full of the details of her trip, but pay much more attention to her social engagements and her experience touring the city, especially its theatres, than to the fair itself.³⁹

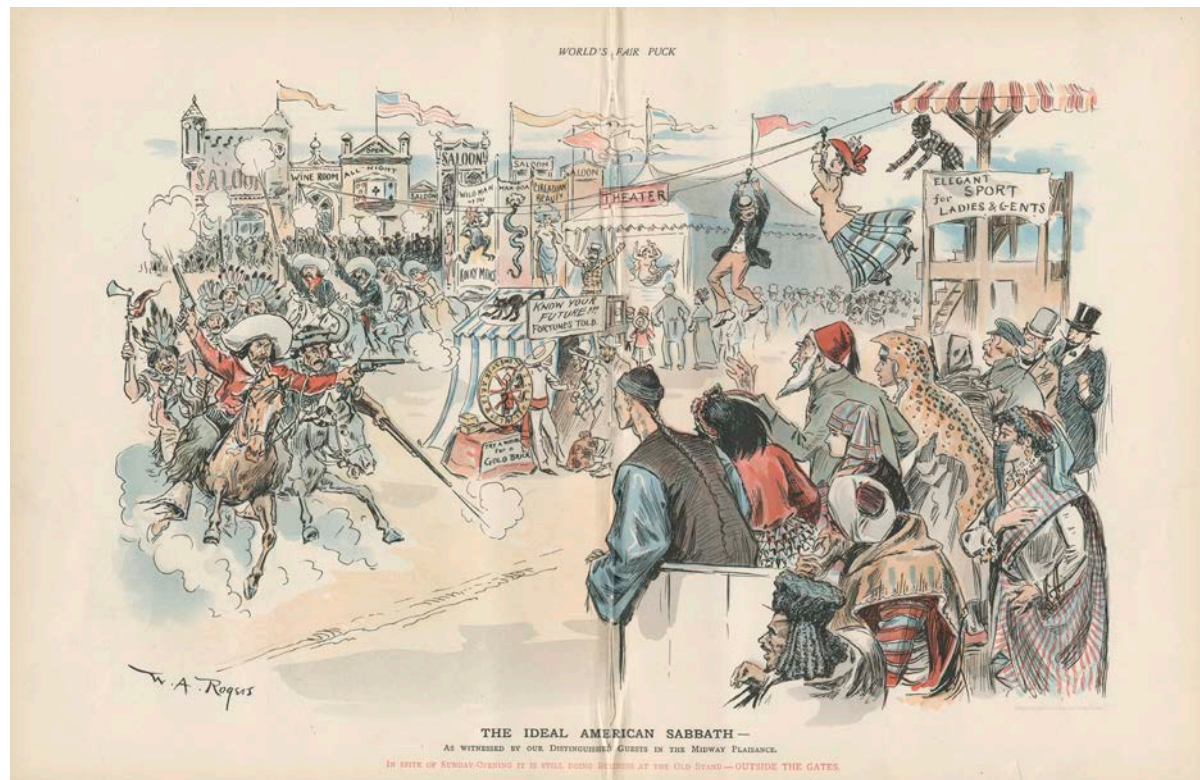


Figure 4. "The Ideal American Sabbath" *World's Fair Puck*, no. 5. This image, which adds a satirical tone to the debate on Sunday closings at the Columbian Exposition, depicts a range of Midway types gazing in amazement at the immense range of entertainments that fairgoers enjoyed.

While exposition officials were occupied with articulating a rhetoric that featured expositions as sole engines of education and uplift, regular fairgoers like Lunneen and Dymond experienced cultures that could not be contained within exposition walls. The theatres, museums, and pleasure gardens of host cities offered similar attractions as the expositions and should not be studied separately. World's fairs can be understood as part of a rich theatrical culture of the host city, a culture that offered numerous performative encounters both in and outside fairgrounds.

¹Rand, McNally and Company, *Guide to New Orleans and the Principal Cities in the South* (Chicago: Rand, McNally, 1885), 7.

²For an overview see Thomas Postlewait, "The Hieroglyphic Stage: American Theatre and Society, Post-Civil War to 1945," in *The Cambridge History of American Theatre: Volume 2: 1870-1945*, ed. Don Wilmeth and Christopher Bigsby (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 107-195.

³Robert W. Rydell, *All the World's a Fair: Visions of Empire at American International Expositions, 1876-1916* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 34.

⁴*Harper's Weekly* 30 September, 1876: 802.

⁵Rydell, *All the World's a Fair*, 35.

⁶James D. McCabe, *The Illustrated History of the Centennial Exposition* (Philadelphia: National Publishing Company, 1876), 304-05.

⁷United States Centennial Commission, Official Catalogue, rev. ed. (Philadelphia: Nagle and Company, 1876), 17-18.

⁸"Centennial Exposition Memoranda," *Potter's American Monthly* 7(57), 1876: 229-240, 233.

⁹Edo McCullough, *World's Fair Midways: An Affectionate Account of American Amusement Areas From the Crystal Palace to the Crystal Ball* (New York: Exposition Press, 1966), 32-33.

¹⁰"Memoranda of Exhibits and Awards," in *Report of the Eighteenth Triennial Exhibition of the Massachusetts Charitable Mechanic Association* (Boston: Rockwell and Churchill, 1893), 32-337, 102.

¹¹United States Centennial Commission, 20.

¹²See James D. McCabe, *The Illustrated History of the Centennial Exposition* (Philadelphia: National Publishing Company, 1876), 32.

¹³Centennial Guidebook Company, *Visitor's Guide to the Centennial Exhibition and Philadelphia*, (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott and Company, 1876), 19.

¹⁴*Frank Leslie's Illustrated Historical Register of the Centennial Exposition* (New York: Frank Leslie, 1876), 119.

¹⁵Bolossy Kiralfy, *Bolossy Kiralfy, Creator of Great Musical Spectacles: an Autobiography*, ed. Barbara Barker (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1988), 93.

¹⁶Barbara Barker, "Imre Kiralfy's Patriotic Spectacles: Columbus, and the Discovery of America (1892-1893) and America (1893)," *Dance Chronicle* 17/2 (1994): 149-178, 150.

¹⁷The New York Herald, March 10, 1876.

¹⁸*Philadelphia Inquirer*, May 20, 1876.

¹⁹Alison Griffiths, *Wondrous Difference: Cinema, Anthropology, and Turn-of-the-Century Visual Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), xxiii

²⁰*New Orleans Daily Picayune*, 24 November, 1885.

²¹William E. Deahl, Jr., "Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show in New Orleans," *Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association* 16/3 (1975): 289-298.

²²*Ibid.*, 289.

²³*New Orleans Daily Picayune*, January 14, 1885.

²⁴*Ibid.*, December 17, 1884 and December 18, 1884.

²⁵Joy Kasson, *Buffalo Bill's Wild West: Celebrity, Memory, and Popular History* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2000), 120.

²⁶*Ibid.*, 112, 120; *New York Times*, August 13, 1893.

²⁷Barker, "Imre Kiralfy's Patriotic Spectacles," 153.

²⁸*New York Times*, October 29, 1893. Throughout the exposition, the Times regularly devoted a column to report on Chicago Theatre under "Chicago Playhouses."

²⁹*New York Times*, April 24, 1893.

30*America*; Kiralfy, *Bolossy Kiralfy*, 36.

³¹*New York Times*, June, 4 1893; Barker, "Imre Kiralfy's Patriotic Spectacles," 173.

³²See Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, *Destination Culture: Tourism, Museums, and Heritage* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998); see also Rosemarie K. Bank, "Representing History: Performing the Columbian Exposition," *Theatre Journal* 54/4 (2002): 589-606.

³³James Gilbert, *Whose Fair? Experience, Memory, and the History of The Great St. Louis Exposition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 13-36.

³⁴Rossiter Johnson, *A History of the World's Columbian Exposition Held at Chicago in 1893*, vols. 1-4 (New York: D. Appleton, 1898), 199.

³⁵Hubert Howe Bancroft, *The Book of the Fair*, 2 vols. (New York: Bancroft Books, 1894), 32. See also Loren Kruger, "'White Cities,' 'Diamond Zulus,' and the 'African Contribution to Human Advancement' African Modernities and the World's Fairs," *TDR* 51/3 (2007): 19-45, which discusses a mining exhibit where costumed Africans demonstrated the process of extracting and preparing diamonds.

³⁶Adelaide Evenden, "June 18, 1893," *Diary 1890-1895*, Chicago Historical Society, Archives and Manuscripts Department, World's Columbian Exposition Collection.

³⁷See McCabe, *The Illustrated History of the Centennial Exhibition*, 77 and 302 for descriptions.

³⁸John Lunneen, "October 9, 1893," *Lunneen Notebook*, Chicago Historical Society, Archives and Manuscripts Department, World's Columbian Exposition Collection.

³⁹"Florence Dymond to John Dymond," 22 August 1893, *The Historic New Orleans Collection*, Dymond Family Papers, MSS228 Folder 44.

IMAGE CREDITS

1. Courtesy of HarpWeek.
2. Arthur and Elizabeth Schlesinger Library on the History of Women in America (Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study, Harvard University).
3. General Collection, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.
4. Chicago History Museum, i62318.

6.2.

Film, Technology, and Imperialism at the Pan-American Exposition, 1901

Brian R. Jacobson

INTRODUCTION

“It will be an impassive and unimpressionable spectator, indeed, who can regard the moving machinery, the glowing lights or the play of colored fountains, knowing that the life of all is that world’s shrine of beauty, the Niagara cataract, without feeling a new thrill for the glory of human achievement, a new aspiration for international amity and the progress of the race.”

—*The Pan-American Exposition: Its Purpose and its Plan, 1901*¹

Of all the moving machinery at the 1901 Pan-American Exposition, one did more than any other to communicate the Exposition’s rhetoric of international unity and technological progress. Moving picture machines captured the Exhibition’s events and sent its spaces and utopian ideals to film spectators the world over. Edison Company filmmakers James H. White and Edwin S. Porter produced more than twenty films at the Exposition, documenting the festival grounds, popular attractions such as the “Trip to the Moon” and “Johnstown Flood” exhibits, the Japanese and “Esquimaux” native villages, President William McKinley’s visit and the scene just after his assassination, and the closing staged battle between Native American tribes and the United States military. Edison’s special Pan-American series circulated widely in the United States and abroad. In short, film brought the world’s fair to the world.²

But film’s moving machinery did much more than simply capture and archive the Exposition’s ephemeral events. White and Porter took advantage of the Exposition’s artificial environment to generate a new cinematic one. In doing so, they revealed a fundamental feature of urban industrial modernity: the process by which expositions and their films transmuted nature through technology and artifice, remaking desirable features of the natural environment in spectacular form for spectators who inhabited the equally artificial, technologically-mediated spaces of modern life, spaces built using the expositions’ fantastic moving machinery and on the backs of their exoticized colonial subjects.

This chapter examines how White and Porter rearticulated both the Pan-American Exposition's rhetoric and its underlying vision of modernity by reproducing each in cinematic form. It focuses on the ways that White's and Porter's compositions recreated the Exposition's layering of nature, technology, artifice, and spectacle through images that beckoned spectators past surface splendors and into the fairground's technologically manufactured landscapes. Beyond the Pan-American films' foreground "attractions," a rich visual field helped transmit the Exposition's vision of progress. By analyzing that visual field, this chapter makes a case for a form of visual analysis—epistemology beyond the attraction—that explores the hermeneutic layers of these early "attractions" films at their margins and in compositional depth.³

FILMING THE EXPOSITIONS, FROM PARIS 1900 TO THE PAN-AMERICAN

"This is a great historical event. Our cameras were stationed in the center of the Esplanade looking toward the Main Approach to the Pan-American Exposition, with the Triumphal Bridge, and the entrance in the foreground [...] This picture was taken on the official opening day, May 20th, when there were 106,000 people on the ground, and the picture is greatly enhanced by the great crowds passing to and fro. Length 125 feet. \$18.75."

—Edison catalog entry for Opening of the Pan-American Exposition on May 20th, 1901⁴

In their efforts to record the "human achievement" of this "great historical event," White and Porter produced both standard and stunning examples of early cinematic representation. In addition to more prosaic single-shot, static camera views of the fairgrounds and exhibits, White and Porter used dynamic panoramas and trick photography to match the Exposition's technological triumphs in architecture, lighting, and electricity. In such films as *Panorama of Esplanade by Night*, *Panoramic View of Electric Tower from a Balloon*, and especially *Pan-American Exposition by Night*, White and Porter did more than simply record technologies on display. Building on recent advances in film technology, they used cinema to re-animate and make more dynamic those technologies for the films' eventual viewers.

The two men came to Buffalo well-prepared to make the most of the fairground's spectacular settings. White arrived directly from Paris, where he had filmed the 1900 Exposition for Edison. His experience in France shaped much of what he and Porter would do in Buffalo. In particular, the Paris Exposition's spaces and technologies had offered White a seemingly ideal testing ground for Edison's newest film technology, the rotating tripod head, a tool that would help define the following year's Pan-American films. With it, he produced a series of panoramic films including *Panoramic View of the Place de l'Concord* [sic], *Palace of Electricity*, and *Panorama of Place de L'Opera* [sic], films that placed their audiences at the center of all-encompassing, immersive views. In other films, he probed the limits of the new technology, turning and tilting the camera as if craning for a better look at the soaring Eiffel Tower (*Panorama of Eiffel Tower*). While the Paris films' shaky movements reveal the still experimental phase of the rotating tripod head, by the time of the Pan-American films, further developments had rendered it smoother and less noticeable.

Finally, in a key prelude to the Pan-American films, White took advantage of Paris's own moving technologies—the moving boardwalk and elevator—to transport the camera, creating fluid panoramic views driven by both film and the Exposition itself. These films—especially *Panorama from the Moving Boardwalk* and *Scene from the Elevator Ascending Eiffel Tower*—offered viewers new forms of modern spatial experience.⁶ As film theorist Anne Friedberg has described, such films produced a cinematic and virtual form of mobility, an equivalent form to the Exposition's new transport technologies. Much as those technologies animated and mechanized spectators' experiences of space, so the new medium of cinema offered them greater virtual mobility across both space and time.⁷ The following year at the Pan-American Exposition, White would use the rotating tripod technology to recreate similar cinematic effects and new forms of artifice and mechanized mobility amidst the virtual illumination of the "City of Living Light."

NATURE, TECHNOLOGY, AND PAN-AMERICAN ARTIFICE ON FILM



Figure 1. *Pan-American Exposition by Night* (Porter and White, 1901).

Each evening during the Exposition, organizers produced an awe-inspiring demonstration of how technology could both control and reproduce the natural environment. Just before dark, as visitors gathered in anticipation, technicians brought the Exposition's unheard-of bevy of electrical lights to full brightness before slowly lowering them to simulate the setting sun. As one commentator described, "it is a new kind of brilliancy. You are face to face with the most magnificent and artistic nocturnal scene that man has ever made."⁸ In their most celebrated film, *Pan-American Exposition by Night*, Porter and White produced this event's cinematic analog, a panoramic testament to cinema's power to reproduce and control sunlight.

They began the film's panorama during daylight hours, rotating the camera approximately ninety degrees to face the Exposition's Tower of Electricity before turning it off. After dark, White and Porter turned the camera back on, continuing the pan at the same constant speed, thereby creating the effect of a sudden transformation from day to night. For audiences at the Exposition night became brilliant day, while for film viewers, day turned into artificially lit night. The Edison Company catalog advertised the film as "pronounced by the photographic profession to be a marvel in photography, and by theatrical people to be the greatest winner in panoramic views ever placed before the public." As film historian Kristen Whissel argues, it "simultaneously enacted and aestheticized technological modernity's

transcendence of the natural order through electricity's disassociation of light from time."⁹ The conclusion of each day, the Exposition and this film suggested, no longer meant the end of bright, consistent light.

Such a disassociation reflected early filmmakers' more general efforts to defy nature by using experimental forms of glass and electrical lights to extend working hours in early film studios.¹⁰ At the same time, however, any semblance of independence from the strictures of nature only masked the Exposition's and film production's enduring and deep reliance on the natural environment. The Pan-American Exposition's daily electrical spectacle, after all, drew its energy from the ceaseless flow of the Niagara cataract. An elaborate system of technological mediation brought nature to the Exposition in the form of hydroelectric power rendered visible as spectacular light. The Exposition's production of brilliant light paralleled the techniques used in contemporary film studios to replicate the effects of nature needed for film production, especially by capturing, enhancing, and mimicking sunlight.



Figure 2. *Panorama of Esplanade by Night* (Porter and White, 1901).

Porter and White took advantage of this artificial environment to build cinematic worlds that were continuous with the technologies on display at the Exposition and that increasingly shaped cities across the Western world. In films such as *Panorama of Esplanade by Night*, the Niagara-powered electrical lights that made buildings appear as architectures of light—emblems of technology's triumph over nature—also exposed the film. Electrical light allowed Porter and White to film at night, but it did not fully disassociate them—or the Exposition—from the strictures of nature. For just behind the Exposition's spectacular displays and beyond the surface of the cinematic spectacles that brought them to the screen, nature

remained the ever-present, if increasingly mediated, source of power. In the words of one Exposition guide, nature was indeed “the life of all.”¹¹

LAYERED FIELDS OF CINEMATIC VISION AND EXPOSITION IDEOLOGY

Both the technological domination of nature that lay behind the Exposition and the reproductions of nature found throughout its grounds reappeared in the Edison series’ seemingly more prosaic single-shot films of native villages and other exposition attractions. In their composition, these films reveal the equally careful construction of the relationships between nature, technology, artifice, and spectacle that shaped the Exposition. In their configuration of spectacular surfaces, framed artifice, simultaneously encroaching and concealed technologies, and conspicuously absent markers of nature, the Pan-American films rearticulated the Exposition’s underlying logic. In the margins and backgrounds of their foreground attractions, these films made that logic newly visible in cinematic form.

The compositional awareness found in White and Porter’s single-shot, static camera Pan-American films suggests Porter’s important role in their production. Porter joined the Edison Company just the previous year, but the Company had already appointed him head of Edison’s new Manhattan rooftop studio. He brought a wealth of talent and a growing repertoire of filmmaking know-how to the Pan-American films. They duly incorporated many of his ongoing experiments with multi-shot films and stop-motion animation that marked earlier films such as *Terrible Teddy the Grizzly King* and *The Old Maid Having Her Picture Taken* (both 1901). These and other films demonstrate Porter’s deft attention to compositional depth and the potential for creating layers of action in the filmed image, an awareness that would be of key importance at the Exposition.

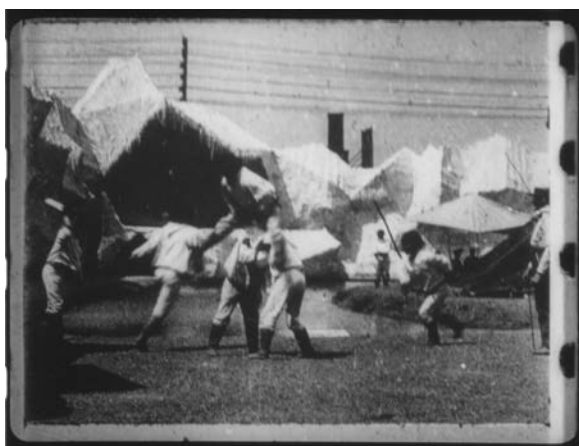


Figure 3. *Esquimaux Leap-frog* (Porter and White, 1901).

Porter’s attention to depth becomes especially evident in *Esquimaux Leap-frog*, the last of three films of the “Esquimaux” village made in July and August 1901. The film depicts a group of figures playing the title game in the center of the frame while spectators look on from each side and from slightly in the distance just right of center. White and Porter framed the performance in the immediate foreground, close enough to capture the details of the main attraction but also from a sufficient distance to include the village that occupies

the majority of the composition’s middle ground. Like its two predecessors—*Esquimaux Village* and *Esquimaux Game of Snap-the-whip*—the forty-eight second film presents itself as a spectacle of exhibitionism that was common to both early cinema and the native village reconstructions.¹² The combination of frontal movement and direct spectatorial address

place the Esquimaux films squarely in the “cinema of attractions” style of early cinema—“a cinema that displays its visibility, willing to rupture a self-enclosed fictional world for a chance to solicit the attention of the spectator.”¹³ But to focus only on the foreground spectacle is to miss another series of implicit messages that such films made available to attentive spectators who explored cinematic visibility in the filmed margins.

Beyond the foreground spectacle, *Esquimaux Leap-frog* features striking planar depth that White and Porter created by including not only the village, but also the electrical lines and smokestacks that fill the frame’s top quarter and distant background. These looming reminders of the Exposition’s source of power give the frame three distinct planes: the primary focus of the foreground spectacle, the mid-ground artificial environment of the “village” separated from the performers by a small artificial lake, and the distant background of technology that underwrote the performance, the village, and the Exposition as a whole. White and Porter’s careful framing of the image suggests that the background layers were by no means an afterthought. A wooden utility pole emerges alongside the village’s highest peak, and the electrical wires dangle just above the village roofs, precisely filling the open space in the frame’s upper third. Finally, two smoke-spouting chimneys occupy the upper center of the frame as a kind of technological performance balancing the performance in the foreground.

Even the “natural” elements within the frame demonstrate the technological reconstruction of natural worlds. The village’s lake signals the intricate system of canals that spanned the Exposition’s grounds, forming an artificial waterscape common in carefully curated urban parks such as New York’s Central Park and the Parc des Buttes Chaumont in Paris. And the very focus of the film, the *Esquimaux* and their “traditional” game, represent a spectacular and artificial repackaging of foreign cultures for display.

The planar configuration seen in *Esquimaux Leap-frog* reappears throughout the Pan-American films. Its repetition reflects more pervasive processes at work, in varying guises, across modernity, colonialism, and early cinema. White and Porter’s Pan-American films make a series of literal and metaphoric movements visible: the movement of the eye from foreground to background; the movement of the Exposition environment from nature to artifice; the movement of foreign goods and peoples from the margins of awareness to a form of carefully-mediated familiarity; and the representational transformations that came with each. The films invite a form of careful visual analysis that points to the importance of looking beyond the foreground attractions that attracted early film viewers. This type of analysis—which insists upon the value of art history and visual studies for the film image—emphasizes the meaning embedded in the films’ compositional layers and the movements between them.

FROM FOREGROUND SPECTACLE TO MIDDLE-GROUND ARTIFICE

White and Porter’s formal strategies for framing the foreground spectacle in films such as *Esquimaux Leap-frog*, *Esquimaux Game of Snap the Whip*, and *Japanese Village* built

on well-known cinematic precedents. Films produced since the early 1890s in Edison's West Orange, New Jersey-based Black Maria studio offered a direct model for filming live performances and displays with a relatively immobile camera and a limited workspace. Mimicking films of such famous performers as Caicedo and the Sarashe Sisters, Porter and White readily applied studio techniques to the Exposition's native villages and their more anonymous performers. In the process, they necessarily replicated the studio films' visual forms, emphasizing the bodily movement and often cultural or ethnic difference of performers positioned in the immediate foreground.¹⁴

At the same time, however, Exposition scenes were decidedly different from the controlled working environments of early studios. The sheer number of attendees milling about the midway and the fact that the performers, while often encouraged to pose for these films, were not on Edison's payroll, made for a more volatile filming environment. Whereas in early studios filmmakers could count on blank or dull backdrops to the filmed action, Exposition performances featured action throughout the scene, both alongside and behind the main attraction. White and Porter thus had to account for expanded visual fields teeming with visual stimuli that far exceeded studio backdrops and threatened to draw the spectator's attention away from the foreground spectacle. As the resulting films make clear, Porter and White turned potential distractions into opportunities to explore layers of action beyond the attraction.



Figure 4. *Spanish Dancers at the Pan-American Exposition* (Porter and White, 1901).

Spanish Dancers at the Pan-American Exposition offers an important case in point. Filmed in late October, near the Exposition's conclusion, it presents a typical Exposition attraction of an exotic dance. In a foreground area set against a backdrop of small tents, palm trees, and the entrance to a large Exposition tent, a group of dancers perform a routine that would have been familiar to early audiences. A placard just behind the dancers reading "ORIGINAL Gypsy Dance" evokes the lineage of similar films of provocative, or "couchee couchee" dances, including *Carmencita* (1894) and *Princess Ali* (1895), that had delighted audiences since the first years of the Kinetoscope.

Beyond this animated foreground, a frame within the film's frame delimits a second layer of spectacle that was of key importance to the Exposition. In the film's upper right quadrant, a barker stands over the dancers, calling to unseen passing spectators and taking money from a line of paying customers who pass into what the Edison catalog advertised as a "Gypsy Tent."¹⁵ The precise framing of the composition signals the importance of this second, middle ground layer. Porter and White positioned the camera not only to maintain the dancers' position in the immediate foreground center, but also at a sufficient distance to capture the scene beyond. The upper limit of the tent's entrance coincides with the top of the frame, and the steps leading to the entrance abut the frame's right edge. Between the two, the barker stands out against the dark background that occludes the tent's interior. Just as exposition barkers coaxed fair-goers into the artificial worlds that lay just behind foreground spectacles such as the "gypsy dance," so Porter and White's composition encouraged film audiences to imagine the world beyond the film's surface. The steps just visible at the film's margin offered film audiences a way to imagine stepping into it.

Interior exposition spaces such as the "Gypsy Tent" not only represented an economic boon to midway exhibitors; they also brought spectators further into the Exposition's artificial worlds and worldviews. In documenting this process, *Spanish Dancers* also reproduces it for the cinema viewer. The barker calls the viewer into the frame within a frame, encouraging immersion in the artificial environment of cinematic representation.¹⁶ This movement *into* the frame, which follows the movement of the Exposition attendees seen passing the barker to enter the tent, stands in marked contrast to the direct address of the foreground dancers. To see *Spanish Dancers* as no more than a film of "attractions" misses the important ways that Exposition films could attract viewers through the direct address of visual stimuli projected out of the frame *while also* encouraging them to imagine entering the filmed image and the Exposition's staged middle-ground worlds and their worldviews.

MIDDLE GROUND WORLDS AND EXPOSITION IDEOLOGY

What kind of world view did film viewers and fair-goers find? In keeping with the "Pan-American" theme, the Exposition's organizers designed the fairground world as a "symbolical trophy town of the great American Brotherhood."¹⁷ As one guidebook described, to find the right architectural style, the organizers "went on that ancient quest" for an American architecture that would truly symbolize "an American Exposition." They considered everything from the "bark or hide tepee of the Indian, the cave of the cliff-

dweller and the snow hut of the Esquimaux” to “the fifteen or twenty story building of steel construction” until “finally the light broke” with the discovery of “an architecture which, *though not primitive*, is in a sense indigenous to both North and South America, and symbolizes the European conquest of the greater part of the Western Hemisphere.” The “American Brotherhood,” they determined, would take physical form as the Spanish Colonial Revival style.¹⁸

The organizers’ decision to use colonial architecture for the official buildings while reserving “primitive” indigenous forms for the native villages, provides a succinct elucidation of one of the Exposition’s implicit ideological messages. The “progress of the race” celebrated in official Exposition publications meant new forms of colonial modernism and sharp distinctions between “primitive” and modern cultures. This ideological frame—the message on display in the middle ground layers of *Esquimaux Leap-frog* and *Spanish Dancers*—lay just below the surface of the artificial displays of “village” life and “native” peoples. Behind the spectacular entertainment that drew spectators in, a further set of meanings could be found built into the artificial reality of the Exposition space itself. Edison’s films both put this environment on display and placed the spectator in its spaces and implicit meanings.

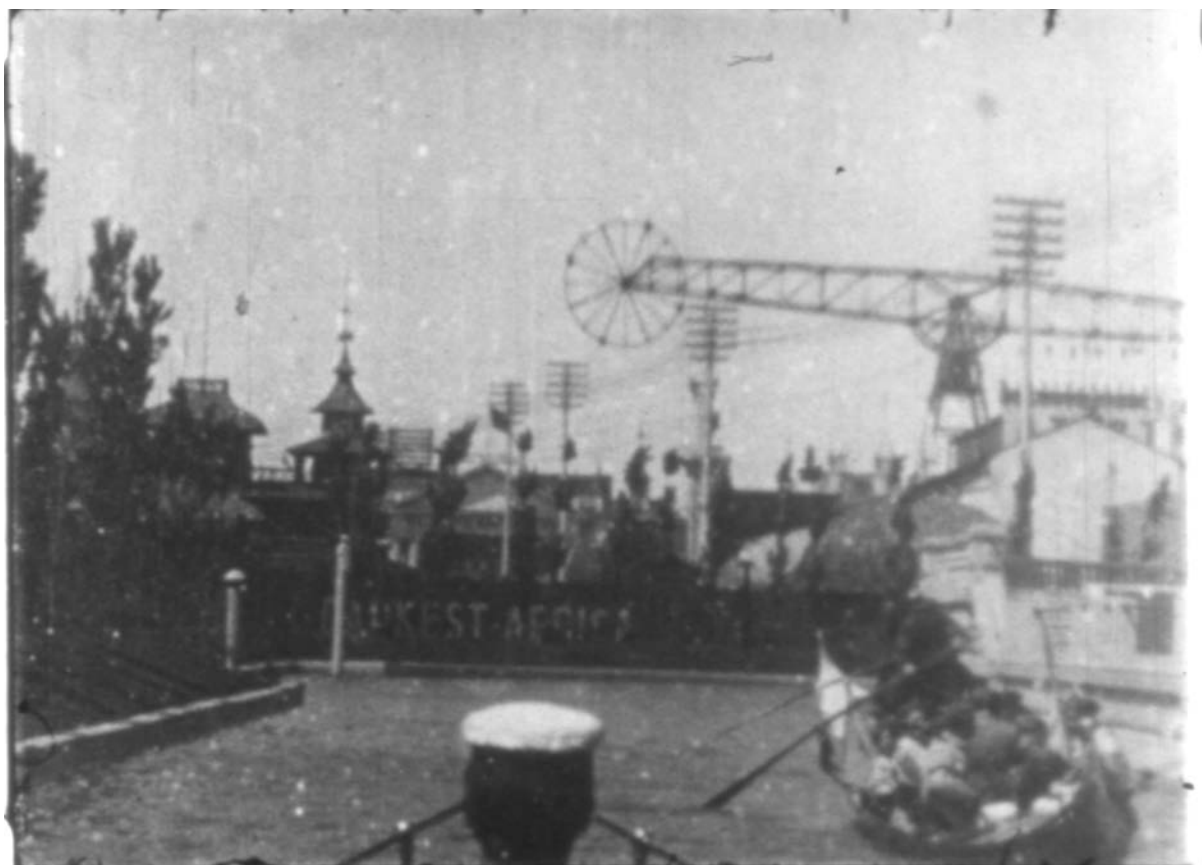


Figure 5. *A Trip Around the Pan-American Exposition* (Porter and White, 1901).

Porter and White’s Exposition series immersed the cinematic audience in the Exposition from beginning to end, from *Opening, Pan-American Exposition*, to *The Mob Outside the Temple of Music at the Pan-American Exposition* following President McKinley’s

assassination, to the closing *Sham Battle at the Pan-American Exposition*, and everything in between. The most immersive view in the series was also among the most popular films made at the Exposition. In *A Trip Around the Pan-American Exposition*, a three-part, more than eleven-minute film, Porter and White captured the Exposition from the bow of a boat traversing its extensive system of canals.¹⁹ The film offered a variation on the familiar early cinematic trope of placing a camera on the front of a moving train. These “phantom rides” encouraged spectators to experience passing landscapes as if they were there, an effect that purveyors of an early kind of “virtual reality” amusement park ride known as “Hale’s Tours” enhanced by projecting the films in a train car mounted on a movable track.²⁰ Porter and White’s aquatic trip around the Pan-American Exposition encouraged a similar form of immersion that underscores the more general way that their Pan-American films placed spectators in the spaces and ideology of the Exposition. In the background margins of the Exposition films of attraction, the cinematic spectator was immersed not only in a fleeting artificial environment, but also in a world of rapid technological change that the Exposition and its films worked to render at once spectacular and, increasingly, necessary to modern life.

TECHNOLOGY IN THE BACKGROUND AND NATURE AS CONSPICUOUS ABSENCE

If only for brief moments, cinema revealed the technology looming just in the background of the Pan-American Exposition’s artificial city and spectacular displays. Exposition-goers could of course feast their eyes upon the exhibits in the Machinery and Transportation Building and the Electricity Building. But those visitors and film viewers who sought more concrete examples of the machines underpinning the Exposition’s theme of technological progress had to look harder to find them. As the official guidebook noted, “the ordinary visitor will certainly find himself more inclined to study the wonderful freedom and beauty of the decorations than to go seriously into the evidence they give of the progress of electrical science.”²¹

Indeed, the Exposition tended to mask its technological backbone, only revealing its power in moments of grandeur—such as the daily scene reproduced in *Pan-American Exposition by Night*—or failure, including occasional lapses in the Exposition lighting system that on one occasion left visitors stranded in the dark for two hours.²² Aside from these instances, the Exposition endeavored to make technologies such as electricity seem like ordinary parts of a modern world. As Whissel argues, the Exposition and its films “[taught] observers and spectators how to imagine the pleasurable power of American industry and how to delight in one’s incorporation into an expanding electric network.”²³ Absorbing this lesson meant accepting the idea of new, nature-replacing technologies as common features of daily life. Porter and White’s films used film technology to deliver the electrical spectacle and, by extension, a dose of this rhetoric of technological progress.

On the other hand, the Edison Pan-American series brought the Exposition’s technological infrastructure into view, if only in the background. The electrical lines suspended above *Esquimaux Leap-frog* reappear in the first minute of *A Trip Around the Pan-American*

Exposition. Extending high above the Exposition and beyond the horizon, the wires disappear from view just as the boat passes between “Darkest Africa,” the “Streets of Mexico,” and the Aerio-Cycle. As this juxtaposition of technology and colonialism suggests, films such as *A Trip Around the Pan-American Exposition* and *Esquimaux Leap-frog* made visible the contradictions at the heart of technological change. While the juxtaposition of the “primitive Esquimaux” with the markers of Western technological progress may have served to reinforce the racial and ethnic stereotypes underlying the Exposition, some visitors no doubt recognized the inconsistency between the rhetoric of “international unity” and the colonialist displays.

Indeed, to some viewers these images may also have reflected contemporary anxieties about the United States’ place in a developing Pan-American world. As historian Matthew Frye Jacobson argues, as the nineteenth century drew to a close, the growth of industrial production, combined with the expansion of trade, communication, and transportation, made both international trade and production increasingly necessary to sustain the U.S. market. Economic stability required more frequent encounters with and reliance upon foreign peoples.²⁴ The Exposition may have tried to hide the resulting anxieties—along with the realities of imperial domination and colonial subjugation—behind the glitz and glamour of progress. But cinema, in the margins of such films as *Esquimaux Leap-frog* and *A Trip Around the Pan-American Exposition*, revealed visual indices of the many layers of representation at work in the Exposition’s presentations of colonialism, architecture, and technology.

The Exposition films mask just how much the United States’ industrial modernity depended on the exploitation of rich natural resources.²⁵ Porter and White did not take advantage of their stay in Buffalo to film Niagara Falls for inclusion in the Pan-American series. This conspicuous absence reflected the Falls’ (and nature’s) uncertain place in the Exposition’s ideas about technological progress. The natural environment made the Exposition’s technological operation possible, but it also ran counter to the evolutionary rhetoric. Similarly, while the power provided by Niagara Falls made Buffalo the perfect location for an exposition founded upon elaborate electrical display, constructing a city from scratch also required the disavowal and destruction of nature to make room for technological progress. Just as the United States’ imperial ambitions relied on foreign peoples and resources, while disavowing their place in industrial modernity, the Exposition films glossed over the natural environment’s important role in their success.

CONCLUSION: HERMENEUTICS AT THE MARGINS, EPISTEMOLOGY BEYOND THE ATTRACTION

“By March 1902,” as one history describes, “the Exposition was in ruins.” President McKinley was dead. An Exposition founded on ideals of “international peace” had concluded with a manifest destiny-inspired sham battle of colonial conquest. The Electric Tower and City of Living Light had been demolished, and the Lackawana Steel plant would soon become

the new marker of technological progress in the region. More than a century later, Porter's and White's films endure only as paper prints and their digital reproductions. But these flickering images continue to offer stunning examples of just how far and wide Edison's moving machinery carried the Pan-American Exposition's ideas and how much they can tell us about the Exposition today.

As visual documents of its grounds and performances, the films offer a wealth of information about the Exposition's character and the experiences it produced. As film texts, they offer evidence of cinema's own technological and formal development in the work of one of early cinema's most celebrated filmmakers. In each case, they deserve rigorous visual analysis beyond the spectacular attractions named in their titles and featured in their foregrounds. At the margins of these images and in the rich hermeneutic fields layered behind their surface splendors, such films have much to tell us about the ideas and ideologies that structured world's fairs and world cinema.

Indeed, these films also underscore the close affinity between cinema's artificial, staged worlds and the artificial worlds staged for world's fairs. As both entertaining attractions and rich indices of social, cultural, and technological change, films and fairs put the concerns of their age in uniquely stark relief. Exposition films offer a similarly unique opportunity to uncover the ideals and ideologies that framed each. It should be no surprise that film's moving machinery, the truly global, cutting-edge technology of its day, would move the Pan-American's fairground ideals and exposition ideologies well beyond its ephemeral grounds. The same would be true for many a filmed fair to come, from St. Louis (1904) to *Meet Me in St. Louis* (1944).

¹Pan-American Exposition, Board of Women Managers, *The Pan-American Exposition at Buffalo, May 1 to November 1, 1901* (Buffalo: Pan-American Exposition Co., c1901).

²See also the Pan-American films made by the American Mutoscope and Biograph Company and featured in their November 1902 AM&B *Picture Catalogue* (New York: AM&B, 1902), 228-231. Available online: <http://hdl.rutgers.edu:8080/1782.2/rucore00000001079.Book.17702>

³See Tom Gunning, "The Cinema of Attractions: Early Film, Its Spectators and the Avant-Garde," in Thomas Elsaesser, ed., *Early Cinema*, 56-62. Originally published in *Wide Angle* 8.3/4 (Fall 1986): 63-70.

⁴See the Library of Congress entry at: <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mbrsmi/lcmp001.m1a06210>

⁵Charles Musser, *Edison Motion Pictures, 1890-1900: An Annotated Filmography* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1997), 606.

⁶See also viewers' earlier experiences with panoramas and dioramas discussed in Anne Friedberg, *Window Shopping: Cinema and the Postmodern* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993) and Vanessa R. Schwartz, *Spectacular Realities: Early Mass Culture in Fin-De-Siècle Paris* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).

⁷Anne Friedberg, "Troittoir Roulant: the cinema and new mobilities of spectatorship," in John

Fullerton and Jan Olsson, eds, *Allegories of Communication: Intermedial Concerns from cinema to the digital* (Rome: John Libbey Publishing, 2004), 263-276, 269 and 273 and *Window Shopping: Cinema and the Postmodern* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

⁸Walter Hines Page, *The World's Work*, quoted in Thomas E. Leary and Elizabeth C. Sholes with the Buffalo and Erie County Historical Society, *Buffalo's Pan-American Exposition* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 1998), 51.

⁹Kristen Whissel, *Picturing American Modernity: Traffic, Technology, and the Silent Cinema* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008), 120.

¹⁰See Brian R. Jacobson, "Studios Before the System: Architecture, Technology, and Early Cinema" (Ph.D. diss., University of Southern California, 2011).

¹¹Pan-American Exposition, Board of Women Managers, *The Pan-American Exposition at Buffalo, May 1 to November 1, 1901*.

¹²See, for instance, Alison Griffiths, *Wondrous Difference: Cinema, Anthropology, and Turn-of-the-Century Visual Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002).

¹³Gunning, 56.

¹⁴See Griffiths, *Wondrous Difference*.

¹⁵For the Edison catalog entry, see the Library of Congress entry: <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mbrsmi/lcmp001.m1b11448>

¹⁶See Jonathan Crary's reading of Georges Seurat's *Parade de Cirque* (1887-88) in *Suspensions of Perception: Attention, Spectacle, and Modern Culture* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999), chapter 3.

¹⁷Pan-American Exposition, Board of Women Managers, "The Search for an American Architecture."

¹⁸Ibid, emphasis added.

¹⁹For the Edison entry, see the Library of Congress entry: <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mbrsmi/lcmp001.09564>

²⁰See Raymond Fielding, "Hale's Tours: Ultrarealism in the Pre-1910 Motion Picture," in Fell, ed., *Film Before Griffith* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 116-130.

²¹Quoted in Leary and Sholes, *Buffalo's Pan-American Exposition*, 55.

²²Leary and Sholes, 54.

²³Whissel, 120.

²⁴Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Barbarian Virtues: The United States Encounters Foreign Peoples at Home and Abroad, 1876-1917* (New York: Hill & Wang, 2001), 17-18.

²⁵See William Cronin, *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1991).

²⁶Leary and Sholes, 126.

IMAGE CREDITS

All images courtesy of the Library of Congress.

6.3.

Humphrey Jennings at the Fair: *Spare Time, Family Portrait,* and the Rhetoric of National Identity

Kevin M. Flanagan

The popularizing support of critic and filmmaker Lindsay Anderson (1923-1994) has long dominated public understanding of the work of filmmaker and intellectual polymath Humphrey Jennings (1907-1950). An aspiring *auteur* himself, Anderson's oft-cited essay "Only Connect: Some Aspects of the Work of Humphrey Jennings" champions the recently deceased director as a major filmmaker, "the only real talent the British cinema has yet produced."¹ Anderson is concerned with the quality and convictions of Jennings's films, and therefore reads them as forming a coherent body of work that culminates with a series of wartime productions—*Words for Battle* (1941), *Listen to Britain* (1942), *Fires Were Started* (1943), and *A Diary for Timothy* (1946)—which he underscores as "the films in which [...] we can see that completely individual style developing from tentative discovery and experiment to mature certainty."² The films he made before and after the war deserve less acclaim, since he supposedly "needed the hot blast of war to warm him to passion, to quicken his symbols to emotional as well as intellectual significance."³ However, Jennings's work on wartime Britain extends beyond the films made during the war itself: he made movies for the New York World's Fair and the Festival of Britain that book-end his nation's struggle. His *Spare Time* (1939), a documentary on the leisure habits of working class people in the industrial north of Britain, and *Family Portrait* (1950), his meditation on the legacy of British identity during the nation's days of enforced economic and material austerity, both speak to the peculiar circumstances of their production. Given the variety of this work, Anderson's hierarchical *auteurist* model is not enough.

Anderson's clarion call about Jennings's wartime documentaries has since prompted historical work that ties the filmmaker's idiosyncratic talents to the war effort.⁴ For Anthony Aldgate and Jeffrey Richards, the docudrama *Fires Were Started* (a story of East End firefighters who gallantly battle the frequent blazes that accompanied the aerial bombing of London) is exemplary because it balances the informational and educational dictates of the British documentary movement with the personalized demands of the stars and subjects of the story, thus maintaining a balance between the "intensely and deliberately personal" on the one hand, and the "resoundingly public" address to the "nature of the

nation” on the other.⁵ By the mid-1980s scholars began to understand Jennings not just as an aesthetically sensitive art film director, but also as a filmmaker capable of maintaining semblances of an individual style in the face of institutional pressures and influences (and therefore as an *auteur*, as originally outlined by the *Cahiers du Cinema* critics).⁶ As a practicing surrealist, founder of the Mass Observation movement, BBC radio lecturer, and employee of the General Post Office film production unit, Jennings can be best understood as singular talent who was nonetheless accommodating of external forces, including the production needs of the United Kingdom and the curiosity of audiences around the world.

One set of motivating circumstances that has gone underexplored in recent critical writing on Jennings is the specific set of demands occasioned by the audiences of world’s fairs and festivals. *Spare Time* was produced “by the GPO Unit for the Joint Committee of the British Council” for screenings at the British Pavilion of the 1939 New York World’s Fair.⁷ *Family Portrait* was commissioned by John Grierson as a companion document to the 1951 Festival of Britain, and the film served as a worldwide advertisement for attracting audiences to the event. According to Philip C. Logan, “expenditure cuts in the Festival budget meant that his film was now not only to be a major source of advertisement for the coming Festival but would be promoted as representative of British documentary around the world.”⁸ While critics such as Keith Beattie and Logan point out the connections between these films and the unique events in question, more deserves to be said about the probable function of Jennings’ films for audiences and policy-makers. What do these films say to (especially American) audiences about British national identity? What rhetorical sensibilities does Jennings take advantage of in his attempt at provoking feelings of empathy, sympathy, and delight in world’s fair and festival audiences?

With *Spare Time*, Jennings made a film sensitive to the *habitus* of ordinary British people that was explicitly positioned to challenge and entertain an American world’s fair audience; the British are depicted as having full and rich lives in relation to their demanding, decidedly unglamorous jobs in the steel, coal mining, and cotton industries. By contrast, *Family Portrait* was conceived to provide an idealized reflection of a resilient and industrious British populace for a British audience. *Family Portrait’s* iconographic and argumentative style is informed by the relatively insular Festival of Britain, a forestalled celebration of Britain’s having survived World War II, which doubled as an occasion for nationalistic pride and economic revitalization. Yet, the film’s extensive export around the world suggests the curious success for non-British audiences of the “story” of the Festival of Britain, which Barry Curtis describes as seeking “to produce a focal point for its perceptions of unities and diversities in the national totality. It is a circumlocutory narrative seeking to invest a new, classless citizen.”⁹ The film was sent to twenty-three countries as a sanctioned advertisement for the new national self-image.¹⁰ Both *Spare Time* and *Family Portrait* demonstrate the importance of cinema for a nation’s presence at such international exhibitions. As an offering ancillary to the “main” attractions (buildings, exhibits, live performances) of fairs and festivals, films have operated at fairs to enhance, nuance, and shape group identity in the eyes of the world.

SPARE TIME: CULTURE AS PRODUCTION

The GPO film unit was given the opportunity to make two films for the British presence at the New York World's Fair, to be jointly promoted under the title *British Workers*. Individually, they are George Pearson's *British Made* (1939), a short about the workplace, and Jennings's *Spare Time*, a short about leisure. The first, as Kevin Jackson points out, is largely forgotten. The second—thanks to the extraordinary sensitivity of its execution and awareness of its potential audience—is now routinely taught as an exemplary documentary.¹¹ *Spare Time* has been analyzed as Jennings' film accompaniment to his work in *Mass Observation*, has been read as an exemplary work of British surrealism, and has been put forth as a corrective to the more paternalistic films from the British documentary movement.¹² It is also, as Beattie reminds, an exemplary film for the New York World's Fair, whose theme was "Building a World of Tomorrow," a slogan with both industrial and cultural dimensions.¹³ Moreover, as Logan (following Nicolas Cull) has argued, it served as an explicit tool in the British government's attempt to sway U.S. public opinion away from isolationism and toward a firm alliance against the emergent Axis powers during the early days of World War II.¹⁴

Spare Time is organized around three locales and their industries: Sheffield (steel), Lancashire (specifically Manchester and Bolton, which are known for cotton), and Patypridd, Wales (coal). Each of the three sections of the film follows a similar pattern. After introducing the industry and area through voice-over, Jennings films a central musical performance, whose sound is bridged across sequences that contextualize the leisure activities of each group of people. For example, the section on steel showcases a performance of The Steel, Peech and Tozer Phoenix Works Band, whose music provides continuity across a sequence of scenes: a family sitting down to an evening meal, a bird fancier, cyclists, and the on- and off-field spaces of a football match.

Logan reminds us that the stated goals of the British presence at this world's fair were to promote "life, culture, democracy, and humanitarian values."¹⁵ Provisionally, we might cede that *Spare Time's* structure and content fulfil this ambition. *Spare Time* shows the industriousness of the body politic who, far from being overworked and depressed, is represented as excessively energetic and culturally productive. Even though the resources, wealth, and manpower of the nation were overextended, the participants of this film are represented as maintaining fully the extracurricular lives of the previous decade of peace. But, as Mark A. Cheetham warns, historical attempts at reading a coherent Britishness or Englishness across time face the "impossible quest for collective social unity."¹⁶ Instead, there is a specific rhetoric that emerges from the differing geopolitical circumstances of different historical moments. A better approach to assessing *Spare Time's* definitional ambition for national identity might pay attention to "a set of relations that changes significantly through history but whose presence is nonetheless remarkably constant."¹⁷ So, if details such as the pageantry of the Manchester Victorian's Carnival Band's choice to create a mobile tableau to Rule Britannia, or the use of Handel's "Largo," strike one as particularly Whiggish avenues for typifying national character, then other choices stand as indicative of Jennings's awareness of his expanded audience.

The British propaganda effort to secure American support actively courted policy-makers and those of the intellectual elite, while at the same time reaching out to workers and civil servants. The most traditionalist attempt to do so was the visit of the King and Queen to the United States in June 1939, where they attended the New York World's Fair and did something like a promotional junket.¹⁸ *Spare Time* takes a different approach. It seems to predict the sympathies of a popular audience by simultaneously (and paradoxically) overstating some aspects of national difference while at the same time expressing the common values found in others. For example, the famous sequence of the Victorian's Carnival Band, with costumed children and kazoo music, has no direct equivalent in the United States (Fig. 1). Despite America's love of pageantry, its version of a British ideal could have been interpreted as alien, unintelligible, or (at worst) pure kitsch. On the other hand, certain details in the film seem pitched toward a specifically American audience. Just before the family dinner sequence, a teenage boy is shown reading a pulp Westerns magazine (Fig. 1). This suggests that the mythological stories so privileged in American popular discourse—of the frontier, rugged individualism, the vast expanses of the West, and violent, if occasionally moral, action—were just as relevant to working Britons. Moreover, during the Welsh coal industry sequence, Jennings shows a crowded gymnasium hosting a basketball game. Whereas Jennings could have oversold the national qualities of *Spare Time* through the use of a cricket match or rugby, his choice of basketball (American) as a competitive sport illustrates the general rhetorical attitude of the film: stress British character in the first instance, but temper it with an openness to American ideas and culture.



Figure 1. From *Spare Time* (1939).

The use of this film in the context of a world's fair helps cement these themes. Just as *Spare Time's* concluding voice-over summarizes its definition of leisure as “a time to most be ourselves,” the film nevertheless ties culture to production. The worker's cultural circumstances, later understood by Raymond Williams as the “whole way of life” comprising both labor and play, *frames the possibility for culture as existing in a co-productive relationship to material production.*¹⁹ While the people in *Spare Time* are always framed as workers within nationally important industries, the film stresses the deep connection between the attitudes that lead to success at work (collective spirit, the self-interested development of skills) and the attitudes that characterize leisure (which happen to be

the same). Thus, *Spare Time* predicts later cultural studies debates about the relative autonomy of the cultural sphere: culture is neither some superstructural edifice on top of an economic base, nor a wholly dissociated symbolic modality that has no connection to work.²⁰ Rather, the makings and meanings of culture result from the confluence of the two. This tension is projected onto the function of the world's fair itself. As a place where nationally sponsored ideals of production, labor, cultural heritage, and material ambition are visualized for audiences, a film such as *Spare Time* (which shows the capacity of leisure to produce a more comprehensive value to one's material labor, and vice versa) unlocks one of the underlying assumptions of the event. Audiences attend the fair as a leisure activity, as a spectacle meant for spare time, but the relentless foregrounding of industry and work turns the pure entertainment of the event into a covert site for conditioning the industriousness of the attendee.

FAMILY PORTRAIT: BRITAIN'S POSTWAR COMPROMISE

Like *Spare Time*, *Family Portrait* thrives on comparisons. In its official capacity as a film on the theme of the Festival of Britain, it attempts subtly to connect the achievements of British science, industry, and culture over the past millennium to the challenges that faced the nation in its battered state as a devastated and drained victor of World War II. Despite the film's success as an exportable version of the official narrative of the Festival of Britain, its mode of address is explicitly toward the British nation (the viewer is imagined as a family member, as part of a collective "we"). The Festival of Britain itself was conceived as a corrective to the economic realities of an age of "austerity."²¹ Between 1945 and the early 1950s, the British people were asked to forgo material plenty in favor of sacrifice for an abstracted common good. The Festival—which, despite having its center in London, was actually celebrated at sites throughout the nation—was seen as a civic gift meant to uplift the nation.²² Its official story had to do with what *Family Portrait* lists as "tolerance, courage, faith, discipline." For Barry Curtis, "the pedagogy of the Festival sought to achieve a diffusion of middle class modernist taste, comprised with strains of new national popular," and can generally be read as inaugurating "a design practice and style adequate to social-democratic welfarism."²³

Family Portrait gives a kind of historical justification through a documentary story, in which the British people are imagined as a family, and lines of thought and innovation throughout time are juxtaposed as evidence of the nation's permanence. Jennings and editor Stewart McAllister rigorously cut between places and times. Nearly the entire film is comprised of comparisons, connections, and imagined intellectual dialogues. Using a master "image" of the combination of poetry and prose, Jennings shows how industry and enterprise have fueled culture, and vice versa. Through what Michael Saler has called "subtle links," Jennings reads into the battles of Francis Drake the possibility of the eventual invention of radar (Fig. 2).²⁴ He shows footage of the test of an airplane engine and considers how the fathers of the industrial revolution would have felt about it. The film finds ways to predict the historical progress of the nation, while at the same time insisting upon its continued relevance.



Figure 2. *Sir Francis Drake* (1591) by Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger, from *Family Portrait* (1951)."

So while the film offers viewers one rhetoric—as the official, propagandistic voice of the British nation, which declares a newly insular celebration despite declining power on the world stage—it can nevertheless be mined for another. According to Kevin Jackson, the film combines “idiosyncratic scholarship” with an optimistic outlook on the possibility of a materialist history of technology, all wrapped into a love letter to a battered nation.²⁵ In this reading, *Family Portrait* radically rethinks the history of Britain, as a nation uniquely situated to find elegantly practical solutions to world-historical problems.

However, these two readings suggest a third. Just as Britain’s national self-image recedes with the rise of the United States and the Soviet Union, it takes on the role of a conciliator state brokering compromises between other world powers. If an age of austerity demands that the citizenry compromise their desires in the face of material want, and if the nation at large was forced to compromise its grandiose sense of self-worth in the face of national poverty, then *Family Portrait* is a film which takes the Festival of Britain as an occasion to argue in favor of compromise (or synthesis) as a way of life. Beattie writes, “*Family Portrait* recognizes contradictions and ambiguities which cut across, though do not subvert, the apparently unique characteristics of the ‘family’.”²⁶ With a re-focused view on the past lessons of national character—seemingly a conservative ideological move—comes preparation for the possibility of a radically comprehensive welfare state.

¹Lindsay Anderson, “Only Connect: Some Aspects of the Work of Humphrey Jennings,” *Film Quarterly* 15.2 (1961-1962): 5. For a comprehensive biography of Jennings, see Kevin Jackson, *Humphrey Jennings* (London: Picador, 2004).

²Anderson, “Only Connect,” 7.

³Ibid., 12.

⁴For example James Chapman, *The British at War: Cinema, State and Propaganda, 1939-1945* (London: IB Tauris, 1998).

⁵Anthony Aldgate and Jeffrey Richards, *Britain Can Take It: British Cinema and the Second World War*, sec. ed. (London: I.B. Tauris, 2007 [1986]), 219. For a brief overview of the development of documentary in Britain, see Ian Aitken, "Documentary: Britain's Greatest Contribution to Cinema?," *BFI Screenonline*, <<http://www.screenonline.org.uk/film/id/446186/index.html>>, accessed March 2, 2012.

⁶Geoffrey Nowell-Smith has written a sensitive reading of Jennings's use of surrealist techniques. See Geoffrey Nowell-Smith, "Humphrey Jennings: Surrealist Observer," *All Our Yesterdays: 90 Years of British Cinema*, ed. Charles Barr (London: BFI, 1986).

⁷Keith Beattie, *Humphrey Jennings*, British Film Makers (Manchester, UK: Manchester UP, 2010), 31.

⁸Philip C. Logan, *Humphrey Jennings and British Documentary Film: A Re-Assessment* (Surrey, UK: Ashgate, 2011), 319-320.

⁹Barry Curtis, "One Continuous Interwoven Story (The Festival of Britain)," *The BLOCK Reader in Visual Culture*, ed. Jon Bird et. al. (London: Routledge, 1996), 209.

¹⁰Logan, *Humphrey Jennings and British Documentary Film*, 333.

¹¹Jackson, *Humphrey Jennings* 210-11.

¹²*Ibid.*, 212.

¹³Beattie, *Humphrey Jennings*, 31.

¹⁴Logan, *Humphrey Jennings and British Documentary Film*, 102; Nicolas J. Cull, *Selling War: The British Propaganda Campaign against American "Neutrality" in World War II* (New York: Oxford UP, 1995), 26-27, 92-93.

¹⁵Logan, 102.

¹⁶Mark A. Cheetham, *Artwriting, Nation, and Cosmopolitanism in Britain: The 'Englishness' of English Art Theory since the Eighteenth Century* (Surrey, UK: Ashgate, 2012), 3.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, 3.

¹⁸Peter Bell, "The Foreign Office and the 1939 Royal Visit to America: Courting the USA in an Era of Isolationism," *Journal of Contemporary History* 37/4 (2002): 599; Cull, *Selling War*, 28.

¹⁹Raymond Williams, *Culture and Society, 1780-1950* (London: Pelican, 1961 [1958]), 16.

²⁰Stuart Hall, "Cultural Studies and the Centre: Some Problematics and Problems," *Culture, Media, Language*, ed. Stuart Hall et. al. (London: Routledge, 1980), 33-35.

²¹See David Kynaston, *Austerity Britain 1945-1951* (New York: Walker & Company, 2008).

²²Iain Sinclair, "The Festival of Britain, 60 Years On" *The Guardian*, 22 Apr 2011 <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/culture/2011/apr/22/iain-sinclair-festival-of-britain>>, accessed March 17, 2012.

²³Curtis, "One Continuous Interwoven Story," 216, 219.

²⁴Michael Saler, "Whigs and Surrealists: The 'Subtle Links' of Humphrey Jennings's Pandaemonium," *Singular Continuities: Tradition, Nostalgia, and Identity in Modern British Culture*, eds. George Behlmer and Fred Leventhal (Stanford: Stanford UP, 2000).

²⁵Jackson, *Humphrey Jennings*, 351.

²⁶Keith Beattie, "An Ambiguous National Iconography: Humphrey Jennings' Family Portrait," *Studies in Documentary Film* 3/2 (2009): 152.

IMAGE CREDITS

1. From SpareTime Directed by Humphrey Jennings. In *The G.P.O. Film Unit Collection*, vol. 3: *If War Should Come* (1939). London: BFI Releasing, 2012. DVD.
2. From Family Portrait. Directed by Humphrey Jennings. In *Land of Promise: The British Documentary Movement, 1930-1950* (1951). London: BFI Releasing, 2010. DVD.

6.4.

Progress is More Than Just a Word: The Workers Film and Photo League at the 1933 Chicago World's Fair

Carla Leshne

Members of the Workers Film and Photo League used the 1933 “Century of Progress” World’s Fair in Chicago as an opportunity to express their opposition to the state of American society at the height of the Great Depression. Two films that survive in archives and a published pictorial pamphlet provide the ability to excavate the Film and Photo League’s images and ideas, and revisit the Chicago 1933 World’s Fair through their lenses.

The Workers’ Film and Photo League was an international alliance of local groups which produced and exhibited “social films,” published articles and newsletters, held photo exhibits and critiqued mainstream Hollywood films and other cultural products. Although the Film and Photo League is sometimes associated with the Communist Party, the decentralized structure of the organization led to diverse activities in many locations, with varying political associations among its members. A loose distribution network insured sharing of films and footage on a national level across a wide range of communities through tours and film exchanges among local groups.

The history of the Film and Photo League was nearly completely lost during the 1940s and 1950s as member photographers scrambled to relieve themselves of evidence of leftist or Communist affiliation during the McCarthy period. Fellow travelers denied their activist excursions and Party members destroyed their records as the country emerged from the Depression and the political landscape changed. During the 1970s, surviving films were pulled out of closets, and some of the history—especially of the New York group—was captured through interviews and articles, though the danger of being identified as Communist was still compelling enough to keep many silent.¹

Some Film and Photo League films were circulated during the 1970s and re-edited by Leo Seltzer and Tom Brandon—two members of the New York group—to be distributed by the New York MOMA, but the two films about the fair: *Century of Progress* at the Walter P. Reuther Library at Wayne State University, and *Conditions in Chicago* at the Southern California Library for Social Science Research remained tucked away in their respective archives. *Century of Progress* was produced by members of the San Francisco Film and

Photo League;² while there are no documents or credits associated with *Conditions in Chicago*, it is likely to have been produced by members of the Film and Photo League in Los Angeles and/or Chicago.³ The two films display a similar irony, aesthetic, rhetoric and political interpretation, each attempting to expose economic inequality, racism, and sexism at the fair, and present a critique of the new consumerist notion of “Progress” as it was promoted at the Chicago World’s Fair.

As Robert Rydell details in *World of Fairs: The Century of Progress Expositions*, the Chicago Fair represented a powerful, moneyed defense of large-scale corporate capitalism in the face of Depression era conditions, and promoted “the gospel of imperial abundance beyond the fairgrounds to a national audience.”⁴ Rydell explains:

The vast sums of money that went into these revelries of corporate capitalism underscored the differential impact of the depression on American social classes and highlighted the commitment of those atop America’s economic pyramid to defusing the potentially explosive political situation that confronted them during the 1930s. As one Chicago world’s fair executive declared: “In studying over the significance of this Exposition I have become convinced that we are offering one of the greatest opportunities for industries and invested capital to lay the ground for a more sympathetic attitude on the part of the public and for resisting foolish and radical legislation that has ever occurred.” From the beginning, the century-of-progress expositions were conceived of as festivals of American corporate power that would put breathtaking amounts of surplus capital to work in the field of cultural production and ideological representation.⁵

Planned and financed by wealthy elite interests, the fair embodied—through the emerging American public relations industry— an image of ideal American life, which dramatically countered the bleak state of affairs outside the fair walls. By showcasing this vision of an ideal America, the fair promoters also hoped to keep political action—the type that the Film and Photo League documented and encouraged—in check.

“Progress in Chicago is more than just a word,” reads the first inter title of *Conditions in Chicago*. Shots representing “Progress” in the 1930s—tall buildings, elevated trains, bustling city scenes, cars, and large new upscale hotels along Michigan Avenue segue into the next title: “And yet—evictions.” Contradicting scenes of life in the city follow: furniture on the sidewalk, a series of people sleeping outdoors. The titles continue to weave their critical narrative around images of poverty in Chicago, and attractions at the fair. Alongside corresponding visuals, the titles read: *“Today we live outside. [...] A former jail turned into a flop house [...] But the workers prefer the Hoovervilles.”*

After showing scenes of shacks, lean-tos, the converted jailhouse, and people living, sleeping, and cooking outdoors, the viewer is led in to the exhibition grounds, with the typical shots of visitors and fair pavilions and the commentary: *“To make people forget scenes like this, Chicago offers that symbol of progress: the World’s Fair.”* Shots of militaristic

and Italian attractions are commented on in the titles: “*Progress in Khaki. [...] ‘Mussolini, it seems, is progressive, too.’*” Young men in smart uniforms pull wealthy looking fairgoers in carts: “*Real progress — a four year college education qualifies the boys for this job.*” Ford, Firestone and the assembly line exhibit at the General Motors Pavilion brings this commentary: “*When the profits are counted, these men will be forgotten.*” Next come the Midway attractions: “*The tourists amuse themselves—or should we say Suckers?*” and a play on words describe shots of strippers: “*Progress in — well, practically nothing.*” Finally, the film ends its commentary with a final montage of corporate pavilions such as Sears, Firestone, Owens Illinois, Standard Oil, Ford and other large companies: “*The fair’s real purpose. Big business displays its wares.*”

Conditions in Chicago survives without credits or written records.⁶ The only known copy is archived in Los Angeles among films produced by or belonging to Louis Siminow—a member of the Los Angeles FPL chapter. Members of both the Los Angeles and Chicago Film and Photo Leagues were extremely active around the time of the fair, but clearly saw a need for anonymity in the cultural context of 1930s radicalism under Red Squad surveillance in the two cities. Chicago saw massive bi-racial demonstrations and organizing among the unemployed, as well as vigorous suppression of this activity. For example, Film and Photo League member William Twigg was arrested near a crowd of 800 gathered to hear speeches in the Hyde Park area, near the University of Chicago. As documented in a small article in the Chicago Tribune, “Dr. Twigg, police said, was seized in a car near the speakers’ stand. Police asserted the osteopath is in the habit of taking moving pictures of clashes between police and Reds and using the films as propaganda.”⁷ Louis Siminow (like Lester Balog—one of the *Century of Progress* producers—who was held in jail for a month in Tulare County, CA for showing an organizing film to farm workers), was arrested for showing films without a license in San Diego.⁸

The Chicago league helped to publish a photographic pamphlet meant to counter the fair’s official guides, called *Chicago on Parade*.⁹ There are no photo credits in the booklet, but there is mention of and thanks given to the Chicago Film and Photo League; many of the pictures can be traced to Workers Film and Photo League organizer Conrad Friberg, who used the alias C. O. Nelson in his films and published work. Friberg was politically active in the Communist Party in the 1930s, was a World War I draft resistor and had been a member of the Socialist Party in his teen years.¹⁰ It is likely that other photographers were also involved with the pamphlet as a collective effort; the editor/publisher of the book is Herman O. Duncan, who was a University of Chicago graduate student.

Chicago on Parade provides a visual and textual critique of the fair by showing the reality just outside the fairgrounds in Chicago. The pamphlet is structured as a response to The Century of Progress opening day ceremony statements (which are quoted throughout the publication) by Rufus Dawes, the President of the Century of Progress corporation, as well as Chicago Mayor Edward Kelly, Episcopal Bishop of Chicago George Craig Stewart, and the Governor of Illinois, Henry Horner. As Duncan writes in the introduction: “This booklet is

a pictorial representation of certain phases of Chicago life which are to be seen alongside the much-publicized Century of Progress Exposition but from which the attention of the public is being diverted by our political and civic leaders.”

The booklet is filled with photographs of Hoovervilles and “Rooseveltbergs,” people foraging for food at the dump, large demonstrations for public education and against evictions. Hunger marches and bank runs counter the fair’s official boosterism. The pamphlet notes that before the fair, police and fire departments cleared shacks in more conspicuous areas. A page of photos shows the Sky Ride tower from the neighborhoods surrounding the fair; these images depict depressed, broken down shanties, children scrounging through refuse, with the tower in sight. Like the two films, the pamphlet was an attempt to use media as an oppositional tool to express the economic realities being glossed over by the world’s fair and the elites who designed it.



Figure 1.

The film *Century of Progress*, like *Conditions in Chicago*, provides a political critique of the Century of Progress exhibition, but moves a step further in its political and aesthetic ambitions. By presenting the fair at the beginning of an organizing film meant to inspire political activism¹¹ with footage from various locales and struggles, *Century of Progress* sets up the fair’s ideological basis as a claim to be denied. Using avant-garde editing techniques derived from contemporary Soviet films and montage theory,¹² the titles and imagery build rhythmically throughout the film to a final unstated but strongly implied conclusion—the working class must organize for real social “progress.”

Opening with the title, "Century of Progress" and then, "At the World's Fair - in Chicago," the film shows American flags flying over the fair's Avenue of Flags, cutting next to a sign that says "Believe it or Not" from Ripley's Odditorium attraction. As an example of "intellectual montage," the film presents the viewer with the exhibition's assertion of social progress through images, intercut with the wry "Believe it or Not!," panning across the sign and landing for a beat on the "Not!" From there the film begins the argument against the world fair's capitalist ideal of American "Progress."

With a critical eye, the filmmakers begin by focusing on the fair's sideshow attractions. Barkers call fairgoers in to see "creole beauties," young men pull the wealthy on rickshaws, men file in to see "Fifi" and other 'Adult Only' performances.

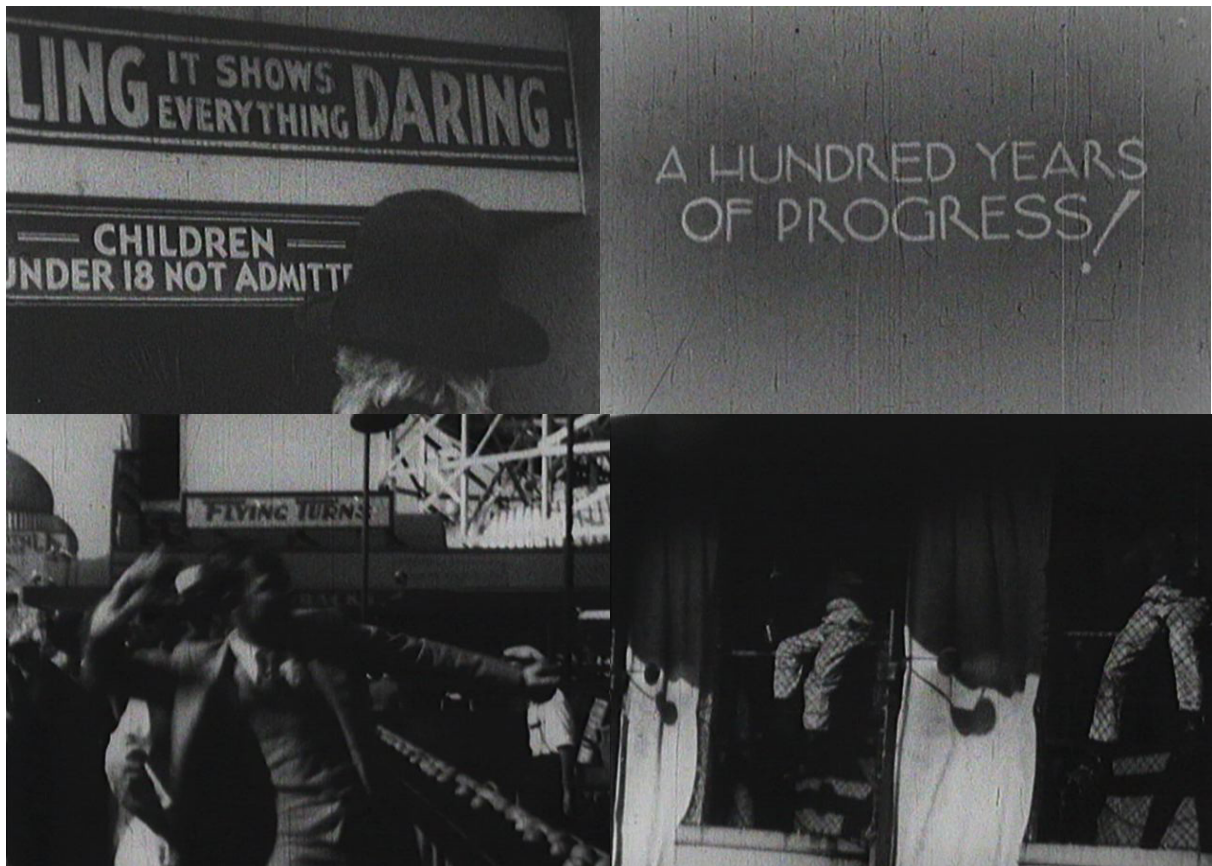


Figure 2. "A Hundred Years of Progress!" reads the inter title before resuming the sideshow tour with footage of the "African Dips" attraction showing a white man tossing a ball at a cage with black men waiting to be dunked in water if the object hits its target.¹³



Figure 3. The following shot displays a sign: "An American Show for American People."

Repetition and short staccato cuts provide an energetic rhythm, with odd visual interludes appearing: a few frames of a gorilla pops in, jarring the viewer; dancing wooden dolls are intercut with the girlie attractions. “*Hundred*” “*Years*” “*Of*” “*Progress*” is cut in again, word by word over cartoon imagery. This concept of “Progress” is recast as a joke by the style of the film montage. Next comes the political critique—a picture of Roosevelt with the sign pointing toward the toilets. “*Mr. Roosevelt’s Ambition*,” The toilet sign repeats, then a laughing clown. Again, the visual montage leads the viewer to make connections: Roosevelt’s policies belong in the toilet. Next follows a tilt shot up to waving American Flags segues into a sign for Fortune magazine, and then a tilt down to a picture of Mussolini, suggesting connections between the rise of Fascism abroad and American business.

“*In A Hundred Years we have built millions of homes*” reads the next inter title. At this point, the film leaves the Chicago fair. Shots taken in San Francisco show a wide assortment of homes and apartment buildings, intercut with scenes from a Sacramento Hooverville.¹⁴ “*We have filled elevators with millions of bushels of wheat*” introduces scenes of abundance: wheat pouring through mechanized grain elevators (the footage is from Buffalo, NY), followed by a “Private Property” sign posted outside the elevator and then shots of people rummaging through garbage piles. The inter titles continue: “*We have factories, but don’t use them. [...] In A Hundred Years—we developed the steam shovel. [...] In A Hundred Years—we have discovered ‘free speech.’*” These titles are followed by scenes in San Francisco and Milwaukee of closed factories, decommissioned steam shovels, a pick and axe WPA building site, and police closing down meetings and soapbox speakers. The inter titles read: “*IN A HUNDRED YEARS*” followed by footage of an African American man speaking to a crowd in front of signs saying “We Demand \$5.00 a day wages in Labor Camps” and “Don’t Starve, Fight!” Then the inter titles continue: “*-WORKERS-*” followed by footage of a Caucasian man speaking in front of the same signs, and then: “*LEARNED*” followed by images from a large march in front of the Sacramento, CA Capitol Building, and: “*TO.*” Here the inter titles pause, and the next five minutes of the film is filled with rare footage from the 1933 Cotton Strike in California. A series of scenes shows farm workers organizing, marching, walking out of fields, calling others to walk out of the fields, and marching some more. The unspoken “*ORGANIZE!*” is left for the viewer to complete.

These three extant artifacts of the world’s fair point to a segment of history that has been largely obscured through time and political conditions. Digging out bits of political, oppositional, anti-capitalist art and media, one senses the power and extent of the repression of the message. The Southern California Library for Social Science Research was founded by Emil Freed, who allegedly visited dumps in the 1940s and 1950s to collect and preserve artifacts of leftist history. *Conditions in Chicago* is part of the Siminow collection of films that were kept in hiding for many years after Louis Siminow of the Los Angeles Film and Photo League deposited them with a trusted friend and proceeded to live the rest of his life in silence regarding his leftist activism of the 1920s and 1930s. *Chicago on Parade* is a published work with only a few copies surviving in the world, and *Century of Progress*

was lost for years after the arrest of one of the filmmakers for screening the film in Tulare County, California. The asymmetry of power relations in American society expressed with such fanfare at the Century of Progress exhibition has continued to define history and memory for years after. Unearthing the expressions of resistance is a small but significant step in defining a more accurate social and historical reality.

¹For background on the Film and Photo League movement, see Russell Campbell, *Cinema Strikes Back: Radical Filmmaking in the United States 1930-1942*, Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1982; Michael Denning, *The Cultural Front: The Laboring of American Culture in the Twentieth Century*, London, New York: Verso, 1997; William Alexander, *Film on the Left: American Documentary Film from 1931 to 1942*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981; Tom Brandon "Survival List: Films of the Great Depression" in Platt, ed. *Celluloid Power: Social Film Criticism from "The Birth of a Nation" to "Judgment at Nuremberg,"* Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1992; Leslie Fishbein, "A Lost Legacy of Labor Films," *Film and History* 9:2 (1979) p. 33; Leo Seltzer, "Documenting the Depression of the 1930s: The Work of the Film and Photo League" in Platt, ed. *Celluloid Power*; Russell Campbell, "Leo Seltzer Interview: 'A Total and Realistic Experience'", and Tony Stafford, "Samuel Brody Interview: The Camera as a Weapon in the Class Struggle" *Jump Cut* no. 14, March 1977; Fred Sweet, Eugene Rosow and Allan Francovich, "Pioneers: An Interview with Tom Brandon" *Film Quarterly* 27: 1, Fall, 1973, 12.

²For background on the San Francisco Film and Photo League and the production of Century of Progress, see Carla Leshne "The Film and Photo League of San Francisco" *Film History* Vol 18, p. 361.

³There is one mention of the *Conditions in Chicago* under a different title (Progress in Chicago) in the Tom Brandon papers at the Museum of Modern Art Film Study Center (Folder D46) which credits Louis Siminow of the Los Angeles group, but it is unclear where the information comes from.

⁴Robert W. Rydell, *World of Fairs: The Century of Progress Expositions*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1993, p27.

⁵Ibid, p118-119

⁶See note 3, above.

⁷"Police Break Up Street Crowd; Seize 12 Reds," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, August 19, 1934, p 1.

⁸"San Diego Police Raid Anti-Fascist Movie Showing" *Western Worker*, July 16, 1934, p 1.

⁹Duncan, Herman O., *Chicago on Parade*. Chicago, 1933.

Scanned images from the pamphlet and a short review by John Ptak can be found here: <http://longstreet.typepad.com/thesciencebookstore/2008/11/a-forgotten-photographic-protest-of-the-1933-chicago-worlds-fair.html>

¹⁰Many of Conrad Friberg's papers and photographs, as well as some photographs of other Chicago Film and Photo League members are held at the Bancroft Library at UC Berkeley, including prints of the photographs in *Chicago on Parade*. Biographical information is from interviews with Carl Friberg, Berkeley, 2011.

¹¹On the ways in which the Film and Photo League tried to use films in a context of political organizing, see Brad Chisolm, "Film and Photo League Exhibition Strategies", *Jumpcut*, no. 37, July 1992, pp. 110-114.

¹²For a discussion of the influence of Soviet montage theory in the 1930s, see Chris Robe, *Left of Hollywood: Cinema, Modernism, and the Emergence of U.S. Radical Film Culture*, University of Texas Press, Austin, 2010.

¹³The attraction is mentioned in Cheryl R. Ganz, *The 1933 Chicago World's Fair: A Century of Progress*, University of Illinois Press, Urbana and Chicago, 2008, p.112.

¹⁴I have identified most of the shots in the film, and can attribute them to Otto Hagel and Lester Balog, though who filmed the Chicago footage remains a mystery. Editing was a collective effort between Hagel, his partner Hansel Mieth, Balog and others. The information about the Sacramento Hooverville footage is from an interview with Georgia Brown, Santa Rosa, 2007.

IMAGE CREDITS

1. Courtesy of John F. Ptak

2-3. Courtesy of the Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University

6.5.

Panic at the Pan 1901: Anarchy, Electricity, and Early Cinema

Chris Kamerbeek

On September 6, 1901, inside the “Temple of Music” at the Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo, President William McKinley was shot twice—once in the chest and once in the abdomen—at close range by Leon Czolgosz, a former factory worker from Cleveland with anarchist affiliations. An Edison Film Company crew, on hand to document McKinley’s Buffalo appearance and the buffet of spectacles offered at the exposition, trained its camera on the scene outside the building, as word of the shooting sent a wave of panic through the gathering throng. Weeks later, with the president dead and his assassin sentenced to die in the electric chair at Auburn Prison (near Buffalo), Edison sent his cameramen to record the event of the execution. Unable to gain admission to the prison, the crew filmed the exterior of the facility. Undaunted by their inability to film Czolgosz’s actual death, Edison production personnel staged the execution with actors at the company studio in New York City. Four shots—two consisting of “actuality” footage taken on location and two consisting of the dramatic reenactment—were spliced together and packaged as *Execution of Czolgosz, with Panorama of Auburn Prison*.

In his seminal and ongoing formulation of what he calls the “cinema of attractions,” film scholar and historian Tom Gunning argues that early film is crucially not an infant or primitive version of Hollywood, but a distinct form with its own intentions, rules, and stakes. Rather than the voyeuristic diegetic absorption constitutive of classic cinema, early films display a more exhibitionist tendency, confronting the spectator with “sudden bursts of presence” and “ruptures of stability.”¹ Though the influence of narrative drama and comedy would soon take permanent hold of the film industry (as evidenced by the brief currency of the term “photoplay” in the 1910s), the early cinema was a technology and a popular spectacle understood in relation to other technologies and other popular spectacles. Following Gunning, I emphasize the early cinema’s critical situation by highlighting the import of seeing these films in the context of the realm of turn-of-the-century attractions—specifically the fairgrounds that often served as venues for their screening. The cinema inherits from the fair the dilemma of whether to edify or amuse and borrows from both of the fair’s supposedly opposed “high” and “low” modes—early film subjects included exposition fare like ethnography, current events, and technological demonstrations as well as more

commercial entertainments such as boxing, burlesque, and vaudevillian comedy. However, for both the cinema and the fair, the interchange between the carnival and the ideal is more significant than the difference. Gunning contends that “the [world’s fair] midway with its overt commercialism and open courting of visual fascination tended to desubliminate the pretensions of the official exposition and bare its devices.”² Early film operates under (and screens) an identical tension. While magician-turned-filmmaker Georges Méliès saw his new profession as nothing more than a high-tech version of his old one—as an opportunity to get his magic tricks down to a science—the cinema lends scientific exposition a measure of stage magic’s panache. The electrocution film—part science experiment, part snuff—takes advantage of this dynamic by activating a nervous circuit between turning on the device and turning on the spectator.

Execution of Czolgosz, along with the figure of Edison himself, marks a provocative intersection of the burgeoning (and emblematically modern) technologies of electricity and cinema, each a focal point of the exposition. While neurologists initially implicated both electric innovations and the cinema in the traumatic acceleration of modern urban life, which allegedly led to a deleterious agitation of the nervous system resulting in widespread “neurasthenia,” or nerve weakness, many of them later worked to develop “electrical therapies,” and a host of turn-of-the-century gadgets claimed to make the body adequate to an electrical age by “plugging it in,” thus inoculating it. Walter Benjamin later recognized the cinematic mechanism as representative of a crucial strategy and function of art in the modern (or neuromodern) mode—shock absorption through distraction and representation. Like the new midway rides at a fair, early cinema participates in a peculiar alchemy that turns threat into thrill by rehearsing the rhythms of shock and absorption. In light of the fact that the assassination of McKinley was a violent disruption, a short-circuiting of the elaborate network of technological spectacle designed for display at Buffalo, Czolgosz’s execution by the still-somewhat-nascent apparatus of the electric chair and its cinematic reenactment seem to realize early cinema’s project of absorption on multiple fronts. *Execution of Czolgosz* advances (and makes more spectacular) the symbolic aims of the execution of Czolgosz with regard to the anarchist menace—identifying and eliminating an individual body that stands in for an invisible threat and providing a state-sanctioned counter-shock to the shock of the assassination. Meanwhile, the morbid subgenre of the electrocution film serves as a literalization of the kinds of “shocking” spectacle that marked the early cinema, while demonstrating technological mastery over the forces of animation and de-animation represented by the cinema and the lethal application of electricity.

THE PAN



Figure 1. Pan-American Exposition Illuminated at Night.

They have staged electricity at Buffalo this summer, and they call it the Pan-American Exposition.

—*The Atlantic Monthly*

Every great achievement in art, in science, in commerce communicates to the universal human spirit a salutary shock which in ever-widening circles spreads to regions the most remote and obscure, to break at last in lingering ripples on the ultimate shores of space and time. Out of a good source evil cannot flow, out of the light darkness cannot be born.

— Secretary of State John Hay, speech at the Pan-American Exposition

The lesson of Chicago's Columbian Exposition of 1893 was that a successful fair had to be equal parts museum and carnival, engaging both the minds and the bodies of its patrons. While architect Daniel Burnham's "White City" offered paeans of progress (and products), Sol Bloom's Midway Plaisance catered to the crowd's interest in fun and games. This is not to suggest that the relationship between the exposition's loftier aims and its earthier ones is either neatly dichotomous or a consequence of mere proximity. Though those who thought the fair's function was to edify and those who thought it was to entertain initially stood firm, the benefits of fluidity and exchange soon became apparent, as the flow of foot traffic might seep from the Ferris Wheel to the Arts Palace. The Columbian Exposition proved the boundaries between the museum and the carnival to be increasingly porous and The Pan-American Exposition would build on Chicago's model. While Buffalo's 400-foot Electric Tower, illuminated by 35,000 bulbs powered by nearby Niagara Falls, functions as technological exhibit and exhibitionist spectacle (phallic monument and monumental phallus), the Midway's "Streets of Cairo" attraction, with its popular "hootchy-kootchy" belly-dancers, is both ethnography posing as titillation and titillation posing as ethnography (perhaps what the strip-tease truly reveals is their interdependence). Even as the erosion of these boundaries is allowed or even sponsored by exposition engineers, the ideological topography of the fairground is ultimately in service of an official and conservative vision—that the built environment can condition behavior and that courting carnival disorder

within the limits of the fairground serves order without. As Terry Eagleton reminds readers of Bakhtin, “carnival, after all, is a licensed affair in every sense, a permissible rupture of hegemony.”³ In part, the exposition is an imposition of corporate-sponsored values and colonialist doctrine.

Perhaps an ideal “way in” to a discussion of the efforts of the Pan’s planners to shepherd visitors to the fair through their unified and coherent vision is to start at the official way in, the main entrance. According to lead architect John Carrere, “every inducement is here offered the visitor to travel along the Park line to the Bridge, rather than in other directions, so that it can be said that this Exposition has but one entrance [...] this important feature having been determined, the scheme developed gradually on very simple lines. The main axis had to be north and south.”⁴ These axes were designed to direct not only the feet but the eyes; the buildings were laid out in such a way as to arrange literal “points of view” and specific lines of sight or “vistas” to steer the spectator’s gaze. This is the function of tourism, another burgeoning American industry, and it was not just what the tourist saw but in what sequence. While McKinley himself remarked that “expositions are the timekeepers of progress [...] they record the world’s advancement,” each individual fair makes manifest a spatial telos as the fairgoer moves through a narrative of progress.

This is made explicit by the color scheme at Buffalo, where the engineers of the fair set out to broaden Burnham’s palette and construct a “Rainbow City.” Though this move reflects the fair’s emphasis on “Pan-America” and gestures at inclusion, it also endorses McKinley’s expansionist (and colonialist) foreign policy and dictates a kind of eugenic spectrum. In the words of C.Y. Turner, the Pan’s “Director of Color”:

As we enter the grounds from the Park through the forecourt [...] we would come upon the elementary conditions, that is, the earliest state of man suggested on one side, and primitive nature on the other. I concluded that the strongest primary colors should be applied here, and that as we advance up the grounds the colors should be more refined and less contrasting, and that the Tower, which is to suggest the triumph of man’s achievement, should be the lightest and most delicate in color.⁵

To some, the polychromatic scheme took some getting used to; Joe Mitchell Chapple wrote in *National Magazine* that, “the gorgeous yellow of the band stand and the orange of the stately pillars are rather disappointing, as one recalls the pure white and the brilliant glare of the ‘White City.’”⁶ The visual message moved from loud to clear, and exhibition space was allotted to reflect the ideological program—the Midway’s marginal and “low” attractions featured ethnographic installments such as The Filipino Village, which showcased the newest inhabitants of expanding Pan-America (annexed in the Spanish-American War), while the apex of the exposition was the centralized and ethereal Electric Tower, a skyward-tending monument to technological progress. As world’s fair historian Robert Rydell maintains, the layout betrays an “intense drive to organize experience” toward the “synthesis of progress and white supremacy that suffused the blueprints of future perfection offered by the fairs.”⁷

In this way, the fairground is an idealized city, a transitory and microcosmic projection of and advertisement for a particularly present future, a trial world. It occupies a liminal station between the idea and its manifestation—the exhibition *takes place* but leaves nothing more than a spectral residue. The outlines of the buildings at the center of the Rainbow City are traced in electric light and illuminated by night. The display of electrical power was a focal point of the Buffalo fair; spectators could even ride electric streetcars from one attraction to the next. But the spectacular and metaphorical import of electricity stole the show from its practical uses. This was the spectacle of the idea itself; Edison's light bulb had already become the predominant metaphor for ideation and inventiveness, making visible the spectrum of possibility. Electricity is the medium par excellence of what Nye calls "the technological sublime"; a spectacular illumination confronts the spectator with "both extreme magnitude and irresistible power."⁸ An electrified landscape presents a simplified and abstracted pattern, a visual text that isolates and highlights certain aspects of the actual and leaves others in the dark, thereby serving as both spectacle and tour guide.

In the elaborate construction of points of view, the Pan's planners are not unlike cameramen. Even to those present, there was something cinematic about the experience; fairgoer and journalist Hartley Davis's claimed in *Munsey's Magazine* that exposition spectators "are glutted with seeing things, their brains have been rolled into picture films, thousands of feet long."⁹ Edison intended to capitalize on this cinematic potential of the fair as a staging of "current events"; altogether the Edison Film Company would make eighteen films of the exposition (and ten more concerning the president's assassination and funeral). He made good on film's growing reputation as a "visual newspaper," bringing Buffalo to the nickelodeon and to those not fortunate enough to attend in person by filming the grounds and recording what would be McKinley's last speech, which aptly celebrated "the genius of the inventor." Perhaps the single greatest invention of the genius inventor Edison was invention itself, or at least a way to market it. Edison sold ideas—his incredible tally of 1,093 patents reveals not only a prolific mind but also a savvy understanding of the fetishization of novelty. The exposition provided Edison with the opportunity to make news by filming his own electric spectacles.

The film of the "Electric Tower," *Pan-American Exposition by Night*, features a slow pan over the tower as a time-lapse trick turns day into night and reveals the luminescence of Edison's vision. The pan was a relatively rare technique in 1901 but its deployment seems almost demanded here, if not by the breadth of the spectacle than by the fact that the exposition was known simply as "The Pan" in popular parlance. The resulting spectacle marries cinematic and electric innovations while animating a postcard picture of the exposition's simulacra city. The camera's sweeping gesture reiterates the spatial narrative of the guided tour and invokes the carnival's spirit of inclusion while maintaining the official vision of the museum. The pan technique also instantiates a cinematic correlative to the exposition's project of celebrating colonial expansion. It was at the 1893 Columbian Exposition that Frederick Jackson Turner announced the closing of the American frontier; eight years later,

film and exposition herald a push past the static frame. The pan surveys a landscape so as to accumulate, appropriate, and incorporate it. It mobilizes the frame, leaving behind what's already been recorded. According to André Bazin, the film screen becomes something other than a frame, something more, since “the picture frame polarizes space inwards” and “what the screen shows us seems to be part of something prolonged indefinitely into the universe.” Whereas “a frame is centripetal, the screen [is] centrifugal,” pointing to a “picturable world beyond [it] on all sides.”¹⁰ Any space is recordable—the act of recording itself, and a little later the act of panning itself, are as much the subjects of early film as the landscapes they pan and record.

In the moments after the assassination, the Edison crew would shoot an unstaged film that features a panning shot; titled *The Mob Outside the Temple of Music at the Pan-American Exposition*, the film pans over a sea of hatted heads turned toward the site of the tragic event, looking at the onlookers. Describing what he calls the “exhibitionary complex,” Tony Bennett details how public exhibitions manage to participate in a kind of Foucauldian panopticism despite the obstacle of free-roaming masses. The complex involves a visual transaction, “to see and be seen, to survey yet always be under surveillance.”¹¹ To make it official, designers of the Pan-American Exposition posted a “Short Sermon to Sightseers” asking them to “please remember when you get inside the gates you are part of the show.”¹² The transaction that occurs when the gates are opened to the ideal world of the exposition is recorded by the exchange of looks between camera and subject in the Edison film of the scene outside the scene of the crime at Buffalo. A few of the spectators turn and face the camera, as if to recognize that they have wandered inside the spectacle or to acknowledge that the filming of the event is itself an event. The actuality film (early cinema’s version of the documentary) registers the contingencies and emergencies of the unfolding present; the camera sees what the meticulous planners of the exposition could not foresee.



Figure 2. *Mob Outside the Temple of Music at the Pan-American Exposition*.

FRED NOBODY AND THE CURRENT EVENT

Although the legacy of McKinley's presidency is marked by a push toward colonial expansion, he campaigned on a platform of immobility (dubbed "the Front Porch campaign")—not only would economic policy hold fast despite an oncoming recession, but McKinley himself wouldn't leave his home in Canton, Ohio. Obstinance was his trademark. Thus, despite the warnings of several of the president's top advisors that crowd control could present a problem, McKinley insisted upon greeting the public at the Temple of Music. At the turn of the twentieth century, the combination of urban industrial overcrowding and political unrest imbued public assembly with a volatile potential energy that, when activated, authorities feared could turn a crowd into a mob in an instant. The term "mob" itself is a shortening of "mobile" or "mobility" and this is precisely what the crowd represented—a movement, a threat to stabilization, anarchy. In 1886, Chicago was rocked by the grim events at the McCormick reaper factory—what would come to be known as the "Haymarket Riot"—when a pipe bomb was thrown into a line of policeman attempting to disperse a labor rally organized by local anarchists. In the wake of the incident, seven anarchists were sentenced to die, though none of them was charged with throwing the bomb or shooting a policeman. If the law could not identify the criminal, it could criminalize the identified anarchist. As Chris Vials suggests, the figure of the anarchist at the turn of the century signified "the mob made flesh" and that "defining the contours of the anarchist was the attempt to read the frightening and faceless urban crowd."¹³

Czolgosz, who gave the police the name "Fred Nieman" upon his arrest ("Nieman" means "Nobody" in German), emerged undetected from the crowd at the Pan-American Exposition. Nobody from out of nowhere—the mob threat remains invisible until a gun fires or a bomb goes off. The assassination fed the fear that the anarchist menace constituted a pernicious invisible network that was not localizable, as Jeffery Clymer puts it, "generally everywhere, specifically nowhere."¹⁴ Dynamite was the de facto symbol of anarchist terror in the late nineteenth century. The writer of an 1893 *New York Times* article entitled "Anarchists and Dynamite" claims that "dynamite is the main support of anarchism" and anarchists are "skulking sneaks" "who light fuses and run away."¹⁵



Figure 3. "Leon F. Czolgosz: After Arrest, Sept., 1901".

The anarchist panic helped spark the culture of shock and emergency that technological innovation both abetted and abated. In the frenzied aftermath of the shooting at Buffalo, McKinley was transported to the exposition hospital in an electric ambulance (in 1901, electric cars were actually quite popular) and messages on the telegraph wire sought out Vice President Roosevelt. The rush to restore order answers the alarm.

Though the people in *The Mob Outside the Temple of Music* appear stunned and immobile, its titular identification of “the mob” signals the fear that crowds are always unstable.

In Czolgosz’s fatal act, the capitalist fantasy of the world’s fair is confronted by the anarchist fantasy of social solidarity. Though he led an increasingly solitary life, Czolgosz claimed he acted out of a longing for community; his last words from the electric chair begin “I killed the president because he was the enemy of the good people—the good working people.” Czolgosz acted alone. Though he had attended several meetings and lectures in the years leading up to the assassination, he was never accepted by the radical community. In fact, he was so awkwardly blunt in asking about the locations of “secret meetings” that some thought he was a spy. Nonetheless, in the aftermath of the assassination the increasingly sensational fin de siècle press exploited the possibility that Czolgosz was an expendable gunman in service of a growing conspiratorial network. A September 8th headline in *The New York Times* read “Assassin Known as a Rabid Anarchist” and on the same day in Czolgosz’s hometown *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, an article entitled “Emma Goldman Set Me on Fire!” linked the killer to the nation’s most well known and outspoken champion of anarchism. Newspapers mobilized fears of the potential threat lurking in the heterogeneous immigrant (both of the above-mentioned articles note Czolgosz’s Polish ancestry) masses that powered the American industrial and imperial machine; the extension of borders incorporates dangerous elements into the national body.

Therefore, the anarchist’s body needs to be identified and arrested, made a site for the staging of a narrative of a recuperation of the national body through the ritual reassertion of legal and technological order. Czolgosz’s execution would be an exhibition on the fate of anarchy and the lethal application of electricity. His legal trial, however, was something of sham. Questions of the potential mitigation of responsibility for reasons of mental health were quickly discarded. The official report of the doctors that examined him in prison stated:

He has false beliefs, the result of false teaching and not the result of disease. He is not to be classed as degenerate, because we do not find the stigmata of degeneration, his skull is symmetrical, his ears do not protrude, nor are they of abnormal size, and his palate not highly arched. Psychically he has not a history of cruelty, or of perverted tastes and habits. He is the product of Anarchy, sane and responsible.¹⁶

Though neurologists were clamoring for a thorough postmortem examination of Czolgosz’s brain, Auburn’s Warden Mead secured permission to dispose of the body from Czolgosz’s family and ordered the remains destroyed by quicklime and sulfuric acid. He intended to ensure that Czolgosz, in historian Eric Rauchway’s words, “would not become a martyr either to anarchism or psychology.”¹⁷

The expediency with which Czolgosz’s trial and remains were dispatched was likely motivated in part by the trial of another presidential assassin, Charles Guiteau, who shot

James Garfield at a Washington, D.C., train station in 1881. The circumstances of the preceding assassination and trial prefigure the crucible of electric emergency and criminal responsibility that manifested twenty years later. It was initially believed that Garfield would survive the wound, and he likely would have if not for doctors' errors in attempting to remove the bullet. As the president convalesced, telegraphed updates of his medical condition were posted in major urban stations and Alexander Graham Bell fashioned an electrical "induction balance" to help locate the bullet in the president's body. Electricity and tele-technology assumed a crucial role in absorbing the shock of the assassination. The makeshift metal detector assisted in the medical operation while the daily wires provided a reassuring pulse of information as to the health of the national body qua presidential body.

As Michel Foucault has made clear, the spectacle of public execution reinscribes law and order at the expense of the transgressive body. It is not a demonstration of the balancing of the scales of justice, but rather an "emphatic affirmation" of the imbalance of power that "gives force to law."¹⁸ The message sent to spectators of public executions was twofold: to ensure the private citizen that the state would exercise all of its power to eliminate threats to order and to remind them of their fate should they themselves pose such a threat. In Czolgosz's case, the public needed little convincing. A vast majority of Americans were in favor of the assassin's execution; some even preferred that he be lynched. Although the scaffold had given way to the "cleaner" and more "civilized" electric chair and executions had abandoned the visibility of the scaffold's town square locale, residue of the ritual work of public display was manifest in 1901, as seen in this brief article from the September 21 *New York Times* entitled "Want to See Czolgosz Die": "In the belief that Czolgosz will be executed in Auburn Prison, more than 100 persons have already made application to Warden Mead to witness the execution. The applications are by telegraph, telephone, and mail. The first application was received one hour after the President's death. Every mail adds to the number."¹⁹ Though only twenty-six witnesses were ultimately admitted to Auburn Prison, Edison's cinematic reenactment substituted the nickelodeon for the scaffold and slaked the general public's desire for visual evidence of the execution.

The history of the electric chair is freighted with anxiety. It was hoped that electrocution could painlessly transport the guilty soul from this life to the next like information through a telegraph. A.D. Rockwell, at the time a professor of "Electrotherapeutics," touted electrocution's efficiency and humaneness, claiming "the translation from life to death is quicker than thought, and with a mathematical impossibility of pain."²⁰ Mark Seltzer posits that a concept of efficient electrocution is latent in the invention of the electric switch, which "promises to reconnect the interrupted links, between conception and execution, agency and expression," suggesting "an identity between signal and act and an identity between communication and execution—'execution' in its several senses."²¹ The electric chair itself (initially designed by Buffalo dentist Alfred Southwick) puts the condemned in a civilized posture and "turns him off" like a light, in Tim Armstrong's terms, "silently and invisibly absorbing the individual into a scientific and technological system."²² The first legal

and lethal application of electricity was delayed by the public dispute between the Edison Company and the Westinghouse Company, neither of which wanted their generators used in the execution. Ultimately Westinghouse's AC current was used and Edison exploited his victory for commercial purposes, asking consumers if they want the executioner's current in their homes. The first electrocution was conducted in 1890 at the same site as the Czolgosz execution, Auburn Prison. It did not go as planned. Convicted axe murderer William Kemmler survived the initial current (though he was likely unconscious) and had to be subjected to a second. Shock was not so easily regulated: *The New York Times* account of its debut bore the headings "Far Worse Than Hanging" and "Kemmler's Death Proves an Awful Spectacle." Rather than assuage apprehensions about modern man's interventions in the electrical realm, the Kemmler incident exacerbated them. The mistake was not repeated and by 1893, public faith in the apparatus was sufficient enough for it to be featured among the technological marvels at the Columbia Exposition. Whether or not the chaos of the electric chair's inauspicious beginnings haunted those presiding at Auburn Prison a little over a decade later, the execution of Czolgosz (and *The Execution of Czolgosz*) provided an opportunity for the staging of both anarchy and the electric chair under control.

Execution of Czolgosz's opening panorama of Auburn Prison (sold separately or along with the reenactment, per the buyer's wishes), as critics have noted, both performs the Foucaultian gesture of the camera as instrument of surveillance and recalls the celebratory tone of *Pan-American Exposition By Night*. The acknowledged disjunction between the exterior "actuality" footage and the staged interior scenes (the film was marketed as a "realistic imitation") marks the filmmakers' failure to capture the real event but points to cinema's potential to access it through representation. The pan of the exterior of the prison was shot the morning of the execution, as if an aura of authentic "actuality" is conferred not just by shooting the space of the event but by shooting the time of the event as well. While the exterior shot amounts to a representation of the literal barriers of representing the execution, the dissolve to reenactment employs cinema's new means of getting the spectator inside. This splicing of "fact" and "fiction" emphasizes the comforts of imposing narrative order on "real life" contingencies. In a sense, *Execution of Czolgosz* is true to the scene of filmmaking if not to the scene of death; its progress from the location of the newsworthy event to the studio duplicates the actual movements of the Edison team. If the theatrical portion of the film is in service of its "authentic" shots, it is clearly not subordinate to them; the "fact" is likewise in service of the "fiction," which supplies by proxy the appropriate narrative end for those unable to witness the execution in person.

Inside the simulated prison, guards approach Czolgosz's cell, retrieve him, and escort him down the hallway. Then the film cuts to a shot of its avenging hero—the lethal instrument of the electric chair. The importance of the machine-under-control helps explain why, within the early cinema's typically limited economy of shots, the camera does not simply follow Czolgosz from his cell to the death chamber or the film does not cut to the chamber as the

prisoner is being led in. The final scene instead lingers on the spectacle of the chair itself, as an assemblage of official personnel examine it meticulously, occasionally performing careful gestures of tightening and tinkering. Of course, as the technicians inspect the device, the camera does as well. According to Jonathan Auerbach, “facing one another, movie camera and electric chair become mirror images, so that a new technology proclaimed to reproduce life uncannily serves to register the process of dying.”²³ After being strapped to the machine and shocked into a convulsion, Czolgosz is effectively de-animated, in a reversal of the cinematic capacity to bring pictures to life. The warden’s nodded confirmation of Czolgosz’s death is addressed to the camera, positioning the film as official document and the spectator as official witness. This move dramatizes the camera’s implication in the network of inspection—the visual evidence supplied by *Execution of Czolgosz* endorses both the electric chair and the law itself as reliable and efficient technologies. While the shocking display at the center of the film locates it within the cinema of attractions, its participation in the mechanisms of state power reveal the degree to which the film charges the aesthetics of attraction with a more grave project.

In addition to the films of the exposition and *Execution of Czolgosz*, the Edison Film Company also shot seven films of the president’s funeral cortege from Buffalo to Washington and ultimately to Canton. Of course, the respective bodies of the assassin and the martyred president (and the Edison Company indeed also made another 1901 film titled *The Martyred Presidents*) are given a very different cinematic treatment. While Czolgosz’s body is destroyed and its cinematic double preserved in the moment of execution, the tour of the body of the slain president is documented with ceremonial reverence. Taken in sequence, the Edison films of the assassination, funeral, and execution trace a narrative arc from anxiety to reassurance, shock to absorption. The havoc of the crowd seen in *The Mob Outside the Temple of Music* becomes the reassuring spectacle of orderly procession. In the three-part *President McKinley’s Funeral Cortege at Washington D.C.*, after a long line of military personnel and the carriage containing the casket pass by the camera, the film cuts to an aerial pan of the public waiting in line outside the Capitol rotunda to view the body, according to an Edison Film Company catalog, “a most perfect and interesting picture is secured as an ending to the film.”

¹Tom Gunning, “‘Now You See it, Now You Don’t: The Temporality of the Cinema of Attractions,” *Velvet Light Trap* 32 (1993): 6.

²Tom Gunning, “The World as Object Lesson: Cinema Audiences, Visual Culture, and the St. Louis World’s Fair, 1904, *Film History* 6.4 (1994): 431-2.

³Terry Eagleton, *Walter Benjamin or Towards a Revolutionary Criticism* (London: Verso, 1981), 148.

⁴John Carrere, “The Architectural Scheme,” *Official Handbook of Architecture and Sculpture and Art Catalogue to the Pan-American Exposition* (Buffalo: David Gray, 1901): 15.

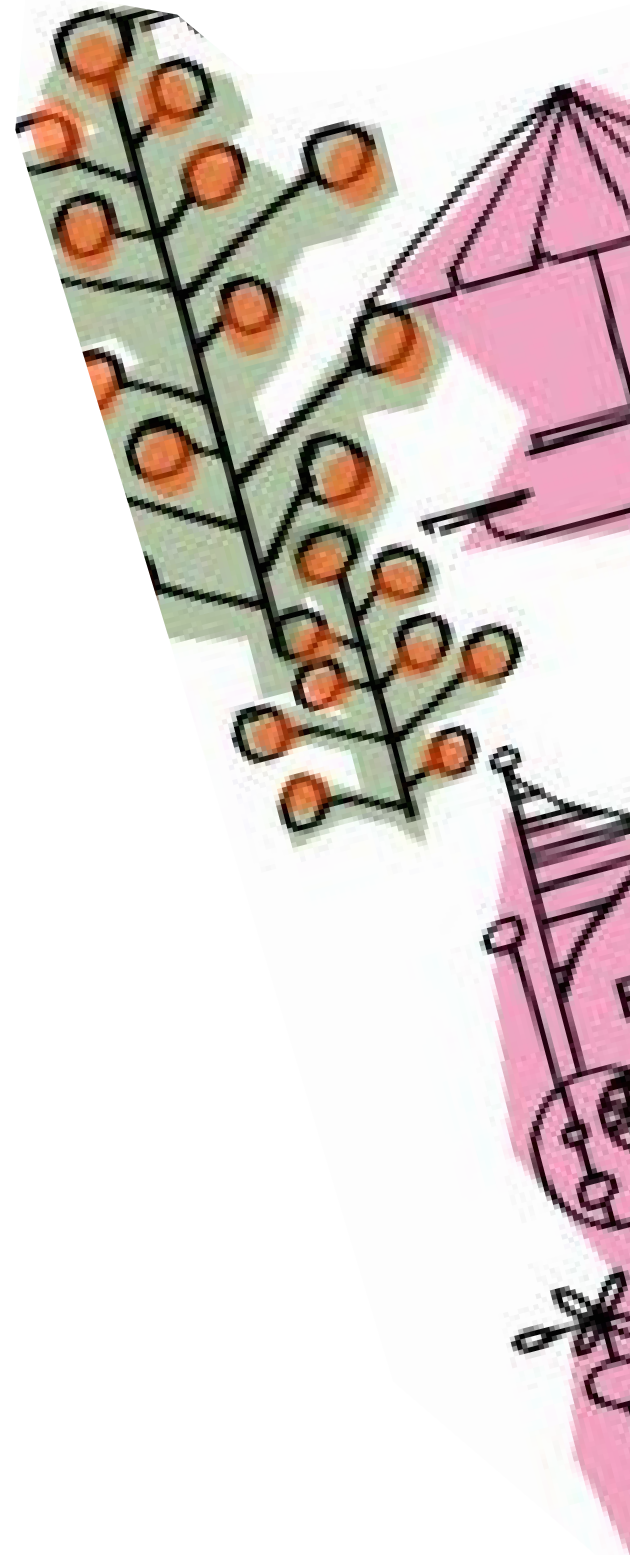
- ⁵C.Y. Turner, "The Color Scheme," *Official Handbook of Architecture and Sculpture and Art Catalogue to the Pan-American Exposition* (Buffalo: David Gray, 1901): 20.
- ⁶Joe Mitchell Chapple, "Personal Impressions of the Pan-American," *National Magazine*. Vol. 14 (April 1901): 330.
- ⁷Robert Rydell, *All the World's A Fair: Visions of Empire at American International Expositions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 4.
- ⁸David E. Nye, *American Technological Sublime* (Cambridge, MA: MIT, 1994), 151.
- ⁹Hartley Davis, "The City of Living Light," *Munsey's Magazine*. Vol. 26, (October 1901 to March 1902): 116.
- ¹⁰André Bazin, *What is Cinema? Vol. I*. Trans. Hugh Gray (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 166.
- ¹¹Tony Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics* (London: Routledge, 1995), 84.
- ¹²Sophia Antoinette Walker, "An Art Impression of the Exposition," *The Independent*, Vol. 53 (1901): 1676-8.
- ¹³Chris Vials, "The Despotism of the Popular: Anarchy and Leon Czolgosz at the Turn of the Century," *Americana*, 3.2. (2004). <http://www.americanpopularculture.com/journal/articles/fall_2004/vials.htm>
- ¹⁴Jeffory Clymer, *America's Culture of Terrorism: Violence, Capitalism, and the Written Word* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 53.
- ¹⁵"Anarchy and Dynamite," *The New York Times*, 27 September, 1893.
- ¹⁶Quoted in Vernon L. Briggs, *The Manner of Man That Kills: Spencer, Czolgosz, Richeson* (Boston: Gorham Press, 1921), 246.
- ¹⁷Rauchway, *Murdering McKinley*, 88.
- ¹⁸Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, Trans. Alan Sheridan. (New York: Vintage, 1995), 49-50.
- ¹⁹"Want to See Czolgosz Die," *New York Times*, 21 September, 1901.
- ²⁰Rockwell, A.D., *Rambling Recollections: An Autobiography* (New York: Paul B. Hoeber, 1920), 232.
- ²¹Mark Seltzer, *Bodies and Machines* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 11.
- ²²Tim Armstrong, *Modernism, Technology, and the Body* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 34.
- ²³Jonathan Auerbach, *Body Shots: Early Cinema's Incarnations* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 39.

IMAGE CREDITS

Films are available on the Library of Congress' "American Memory" web page:

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/edhtml/edmvhm.html>

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AMUSEMENTS & RECREATION PAVILION

SECTION 7



7.1.

How the Theme Park Got Its Power: The World's Fair as Cultural Form

Scott A. Lukas

The first sense that the guest experiences is one of awe. From the minute that she steps through the front gate, she is transported to a place that looks nothing like the outside world. There are extravagant minarets that line the entrance, a series of castle walls, and multicolored fabrics that might never have existed outside this place. She further explores the space, discovering new surprises around every corner—an elaborate fountain that appears to have taken years and years to produce, a breathtaking video screen display that flashes evocative image after image, street performers who aim to delight her, and rides and machines that could have only been designed by technological wizards. She reflects on how there is so much to do and perhaps not much time to see everything, but the smells, sights, sounds, and sensations that seem to evoke multiple emotions at once compel her to seek out more, to explore, and to reflect on herself and the world.

This fictionalized narrative illustrates a scene that could have taken place at any number of world's fairs and theme parks, across time and space—The World's Columbian Exposition (Chicago, 1893), the Panama-Pacific International Exposition (San Francisco, 1915), the 1939-40 New York World's Fair, the Century 21 Exposition (Seattle, 1962), the 1964 New York World's Fair, Walt Disney World, Six Flags Over Texas, Universal Orlando's Islands of Adventure, Busch Gardens Williamsburg.¹ Wherever the place and whether a world's fair or a theme park, the experience of the guest who visits the space would reflect psychological, corporeal, cultural, and existential tendencies common to all such spaces. This chapter begins with the context of the guest who visits such a space to more critically analyze the interesting, complex, and often contradictory relationships between the world's fair and the theme park.

This chapter will emphasize the relationships of world's fairs and theme parks as cultural zones with particular emphasis on the impact of both forms on the people who visited and worked in them. While the historical contexts of these two forms are incredibly significant, this chapter focuses on cultural influences with specific attention to the “traces” of influence and meaning that appear between them. In this sense, the chapter looks at the relationships of world's fairs and theme parks through attention to five areas of comparison. These

include: architecture and space; cultural displays; sociality and social patterns; material culture, consumption, and commodity; and rides and attractions. The exploration of these areas of comparison will offer insights on the significant relationships between world's fairs and theme parks as well as explain some of the future trajectories of worlds' fairs, theme parks, and themed entertainment spaces.

FOR THE PEOPLE SAW THE BUILDINGS AND WALKED THE PLAZAS (ARCHITECTURE AND SPACE)

The topic of architecture and space is foundational in terms of points of comparison between the world's fair and the theme park. For the guest who first visits one of these spaces, it is the combination of architecture and spatial effects that creates the senses of awe, the sublime, mystery, and magic that result in the most meaningful impacts on the guest. Americans who visited expositions like the Centennial International Exhibition (Philadelphia, 1876) and the World's Columbian Exposition were struck by the combinations of monumental architecture, dramatic building forms that had never been seen before, and curious and exotic spaces like those that represented the many nations of the world. The architectural and spatial approaches of the fairs of 1876, 1893, and many others to follow emphasized the idea that *total, unified space could be a reality*. For the amusement parks to follow—especially Sea Lion Park, Steeplechase Park, Luna Park and Dreamland—this vision of total space would be a key component of their success.² In this regard, world's fairs and theme parks share the idea that guests have the desire to experience leisure in one unified space. This is perhaps akin to the concept of “total cinema” in spatial form, a pursuit that clearly aligns with later theme park endeavors, such as Disneyland.³

In contrast to the permanent structures of theme parks, the buildings that were created for world's fairs were temporary signs of the times—architectural versions of Navajo sand paintings that, due to their use of staff as building material, could only last a year or less. This didn't matter for the fair, of course, since the utopian project created in the space was meant to cast only temporary visions that would, ultimately, etch themselves in the minds of all those who visited it. Aside from this difference, another characteristic shared by world's fairs and theme parks is the symbolic use of architecture. At the Exposition Universelle (Paris, 1889), the 1939–40 New York World's Fair, the Century 21 Exposition, and Expo 67 (Montreal, 1967), visitors became familiar with the Eiffel Tower, the Trylon and Perisphere, the Space Needle, the geodesic dome and Habitat 67. Here, world's fairs institute a second principle of architecture and space that would be equally important to the theme park—the idea that *key icons and symbols could be used to organize spaces and orient guests and establish relationships between them*. Even the less monumental structures within the fair spaces had this iconic and symbolic quality. At many fairs, a notable tradition developed in which buildings took the form of icons—giant product tins (like those of Joseph Emberton), structures that resembled ship hulls, and many other variations.⁴ This is a symbolic form that quickly, efficiently, and simply communicates (on its surface) the intended messages associated with the form. As corporate sponsorship took hold, this technique also aided in establishing brand identity, such as the Ford and General Tire Pavilions at (Fair/Year) and

the IBM Pavilion at the 1964 New York World's Fair. This tradition would be further adopted and expanded by the amusement parks of Coney Island and, even more importantly, the theme parks of Disney. In the case of Disney, the idea of the “weenie”—an iconic structure, like Cinderella Castle—serves to both orient the guest within the space and also establish a meaningful connection with the theme park and the larger Disney brand.

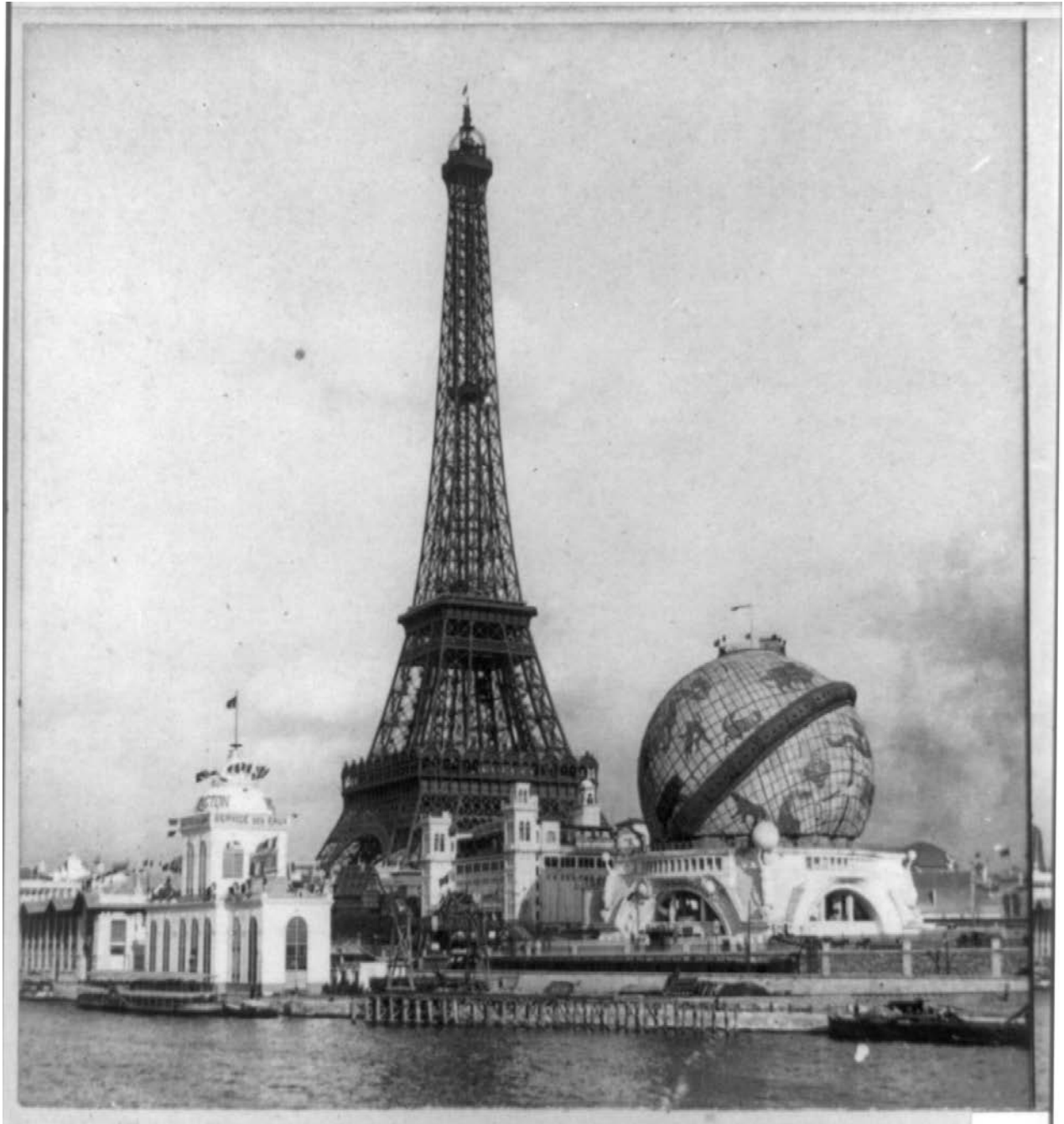


Figure 1. The Eiffel Tower—one of the most iconic structures to have ever been created at a world's fair.

As Neil Harris suggests, one of the most significant of the many revolutionary suggestions offered by the World's Columbian Exposition was the notion that, unlike the unruly city, *space could be efficiently and effectively controlled*.⁵ The simple fact of a site plan—an organized map of the fair that established distinctive zones that would mimic the intensive categorization and organization of objects of material culture—offered the sense that a

sprawling and potentially chaotic space could be brought under control. As Harris suggests, world's fairs, through a combination of multiple and intertwined measures, offered safe, clean, peaceful, and efficient forms of entertainment—something that the many amusement parks of Coney Island, including Steeplechase Park, would draw upon.⁶ By the time of the 1939–40 New York World's Fair, this organization and control of space had matured and the practice would later influence theme parks like those of Disney—what many consider the penultimate model of the spatial control of amusement space.⁷

Finally, world's fairs established an *architectural and spatial tradition* for both amusement and theme parks. Beginning with the World's Columbian Exposition, the public, entrepreneurs, and city planners took note of the successful architectural vision of the exposition—specifically the austere Beaux Arts tradition that it launched—and saw this specific use of architecture and space as a potential formula for other types of developments. Following the 1893 fair, multiple “white city” amusement parks (each reflecting architectural styles similar to the White City) opened across the world, as if to signal the idea that wide-scale entertainment and amusement success was replicable.⁸

FOR THE PEOPLE SAW OTHER PLACES (CULTURAL DISPLAYS)

The architectural and spatial influences that world's fairs had on amusement and theme parks are in no small part due to the fact that material and symbolic culture play a dominant role in creating tangible effects in guests. But connected to these material forms are significant immaterial concepts like people, place, event, tradition, and idea. Anthropologists consider material and ideational culture to be inherently intertwined and no more clearly is this illustrated than in the many ways in which world's fairs established powerful traditions of cultural display.

For the guest who visited an expo like the World's Columbian Exposition, it would have been a remarkable sight. Around every corner the visitor would have seen places that did not logically interconnect—Old Vienna, an ostrich farm, a Brazilian concert hall, a Chinese theatre, an Irish village, the Streets of Cairo, the Street of Constantinople, a Tunisian palace, a Japanese bazaar, a German village, and numerous other spaces from around the world.⁹ The reliance on cultural display that world's fairs promoted would go on to affect both popular and high culture in notable ways. As will be expressed in the next section, one of the main reasons why these incongruent combinations of places were accepted by guests at fairs was the desire of visitors to come into contact with a racialized and exoticized Other. An equally powerful motivation was the sense of traveling without traveling. For guests who could not otherwise afford to partake in a “Grand Tour”—a form of cultural excursion accessible only to the very wealthy—a visit to an exposition like the World's Columbian Exposition would have provided similarly vivid senses of discovery, excitement, and self-reflection that would be achieved through worldly travel. While not a substitute for worldly travel, the world's fair emphasized that *through place sampling the world could be seen in a day*.¹⁰



Figure 2. A View of Old Vienna from the World's Columbian Exposition.

Place sampling is a tradition that has roots in the worlds of missionary religion, scientific and geographical exploration, and the visual arts.¹¹ With the advent of the world's fair tradition, however, place sampling takes on an even more powerful potential. The ability to re-create the Streets of Cairo—complete with appropriate architecture, forms of material culture and design, and people and performers indigenous to the place being sampled—offered a glimpse into a world that went beyond the speeches, papers, artistic and visual representations of previous forms of place sampling. By giving a re-created place its three-dimensionality, its performativity, and its corporeality, the world's fair gave to the amusement and the theme park the form known as thematic space.

Whereas place sampling is the ideology of the desire to re-create another place and its cultural displays, thematic space is the material embodiment of this desire. Any place—whether a blarney castle or an indigenous Igorot village—could be re-created given the correct combination of architecture, people, performance, and cultural modes. The stunning spaces that were often created in meticulous detail for world's fairs illustrated the notion that *a theme, especially when related to cultural display, has a profound and personal effect on the visitor.*

Like the rides in their spaces, the many themed villages and features of world's fairs were repeated at subsequent expositions. Following its success at the 1893 exposition, the Streets of Cairo appeared at many subsequent fairs—Exposition Internationale d'Anvers (Antwerp, Belgium, 1894), the Pan-American Exposition (Buffalo, 1901), and the Panama-Pacific International Exposition. This formula for amusement success went on to influence the many variations and copies of spaces and attractions that appeared at Coney Island amusement parks. In fact, Walt Disney himself introduced a number of attractions at the 1966-65 New York World's Fair, which later made their way into his parks. Much later, beginning in the 1950s, the theme park traditions of Disney and Six Flags Over Texas drew upon the place sampling of the world's fair. Theming, which has become a mainstay of contemporary popular entertainment spaces, has its roots in these early examples from world's fairs.¹²

FOR THE PEOPLE SAW OTHER PEOPLE (SOCIALITY AND SOCIAL PATTERNS)

The idea of place sampling and the practice of thematic space, or theming, as has been considered, rely on the effective use of material culture to create the right associations between the place and the guest experience. Added to these material forms was the key human element—the visitor. In the case of many of the early fairs (including the World's Columbian Exposition), as Robert Rydell has illustrated, the relationship between the visitor and the actor, performer, or cultural representative on stage was an exploitative, racial, and inherently problematic one.¹³ The world's fair, in multiple ways, established a tradition of *the exotic as a source of desire*.

Equally significant are the ways in which world's fairs promoted a *performativity of culture*.¹⁴ Places were not simply re-created—they were staffed with people who could eat, dance, act, even sleep like they would in their home habitats. Amusement parks drew on these same performative traditions and created their own versions of spaces that emphasized human actors or performers. Later, theme parks used similar approaches. Disney's Animal Kingdom, as one example, uses indigenous performers in their shows and emphasizes the fact that many of the structures at the park were built by indigenous craftspeople who were flown in for this purpose.¹⁵

Connected to the performative uses of people within the space of world's fairs is the influence that the fair enacted in terms of *the effective control of people in space*. As Michel Foucault has offered, the control of people in various spatial institutions, such as the prison and mental institution, has a long history in Western culture.¹⁶ In the case of the world's fair, this institutional history has a similar enactment, but what differs is the extent to which the control seems to be a soft form, unlike the hard form in a total institution like a prison. Certain features that were seen at the 1893 and subsequent expositions—such as the turnstile, maps, transportation systems (the moving sidewalk), and the ubiquitous security guard—are practical innovations that have remained in today's theme parks.¹⁷ Even more important, though, were covert methods of controlling people. As John Kasson wrote

of Coney Island amusement parks, there was a need to use rides, attractions, architecture, and geography in ways that promoted an illusion of the guest's freedom yet kept him in line.¹⁸ Rides, including those that could be viewed by a crowd—such as the switchback railway—were a popular way in which people could be lulled into a seduction of control without knowing it. Steeplechase Park mastermind George Tilyou used the inspirations of the World's Columbian Exposition to design even more successful attractions that both threw people together—to help usher in a spirit of gregariousness in popular amusements—and kept them under control. These and many other examples of social control illustrate a powerful lesson in terms of the world's fair's ability to handle the massive numbers of visitors, all the while making their visit enjoyable and focused on their needs.

FOR THE PEOPLE TRIED AND BOUGHT THE THINGS (MATERIAL CULTURE, CONSUMPTION, AND COMMODITY)

Today, a visit to any theme park would find the guest confronted with a multitude of products, product and service pitches, and brand after brand. Like their world's fair counterparts of the past, today's theme parks are commonly branded—rides are adorned with logos and brand associations, signage reflects similar representations, and many of the actions within the space are directed towards acts of consumption (including gift shops). These contemporary manifestations of brands and products may be tied to the earlier instances in which the world's fair helped establish the *public desirability of the commodity form, helped naturalize it, and make it the center of attention for public amusements*. Many scholars who have studied the world exposition have noted the key role that the commodity form plays in the evolution of the exposition. The “exhibitionary complex” that Tony Bennett has described provided a new platform in which goods could be viewed publically.¹⁹ This complex not only expanded the power and purview of the company but also created new desires in the guest for forms of public consumption.

Equally powerful was the way in which world's fairs *influenced the categorization of commodity forms*. The various international, state, and manufacturing sites within the space of a world's fair offered a tradition in which many commodity forms could be easily categorized and compared.²⁰ This itself impacted the guest who was encouraged not only to think about consumption as a natural part of his identity but also transformed the ways in which that guest considered spheres of life beyond the spaces of the exposition. Consider as one example the powerful narratives of home, work, family, and lifestyle that were promoted in the futuristic visions of Democracy at the 1939–40 New York World's Fair. The world's fair, along with other popular institutions, promoted a division of the consumer's world that now is now a natural part of the futuristic spaces of Future World at Disney's Epcot, for instance.²¹



Figure 3. A view of a suggested domestic sphere at the Century of Progress Exposition.

As world's fairs established this incredible potential to both promote a commodity and give it its proper place within the space, the apotheosis of the brand was the final outcome. By the time of the 1939–40 New York World's Fair, companies had overrun many spaces of the fair. The Food Zone of this same fair offered Wonder Bread, Lucky Strike, Borden, and many other spaces that had as their key focus the brand. In this instance, the brand, and nothing beyond it, is the prime communicator of concepts, ideals, and values to the guests who visited these spaces.²² In today's theme park the brand plays a major role in communicating ideals of the desirable life, promoting values held by the corporation, and in integrating the guest into the spaces and attractions.

FOR THE PEOPLE RODE THE RIDES (RIDES AND ATTRACTIONS)

Of any structure that appeared at a world exposition, rivaled only by the Eiffel Tower, the Ferris wheel that premiered at the World's Columbian Exposition is the most spectacular. What made this structure stand out was not just its uniqueness, its size, or its buttressing of the Midway Plaisance, but its movement. Like the many rides that made up the 1893 fair and the many to follow it, the Ferris wheel beckoned each and every visitor to the exposition space to gawk at it and, eventually, to ride it. The world's fair *elevated the status of the amusement ride*—a fact that would be expanded at Coney Island and in future theme parks. Were it not for the Midway Plaisance and the Ferris wheel, today's theme park might be a much more austere space.

By the time of the Centennial Exposition in 1876, the amusement zone became a facet of all world's fairs.²³ By 1893 this zone—the Midway—had expanded to such an extent that some called for its closure, others celebrated its attack on the solemn sobriety of the rest of the White City's exposition grounds.²⁴ The world's fair, in its most important moment as far as the amusement ride is concerned, *provided a legitimate space in which amusement rides and attractions could be organized*. As roller coaster historian Robert Cartmell indicates, prior to the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893, rides were isolated entities.²⁵ What the Midway of 1893 established, much to the chagrin of many social critics, was a centralized zone of amusement. Much like the themelands of theme parks today, the Midway was a one-stop shop for rides, concessions, attractions, and other forms of variety entertainment.



Figure 4. The Ferris wheel as seen at the World's Columbian Exposition.

The world's fair's development of a legitimate space for the ride led to increasing innovation within the world of ride design. Like other areas of the fair, an arms race developed in which the next ride had to be bigger, better, more thrilling than the last one. In this regard the world's fair gave us *the powerful narrative of rides that told a story*. Frederic Thompson and Skip Dundy, who would both famously open the successful Coney Island amusement park Luna Park, achieved great success at the Pan-American Exposition with their A Trip to the Moon. This particular ride would go on to thrill more visitors at Steeplechase Park and Luna Park. What was significant about this ride was its ability to singularly provide guests with an illusion that they had travelled somewhere exotic. It is reported that the special effects of the ride were so realistic that some people argued, even wagered, on whether or not the "contrivance" from the ride had actually flown or not.²⁶ President McKinley said of the ride, "It was the most marvelous experience of my life."²⁷ Like the "themelands" that encompassed this and many other rides, A Trip to the Moon offered visitors to the fairs an unprecedented sense of total immersion. Immersive technologies completely swept up the participant within the scope of the ride narrative. Other immersive and narrative-based attractions—including The Creation, the Galveston Flood, the Boer War, large-scale fire-fighting demos, and many others—went on to captivate guests at both the world's fair and the Coney Island amusement park.²⁸ The impact of such rides is lasting, transforming not only the nature of public amusement space but also whetting the appetite of a public that clamor for more and more immersive stories.

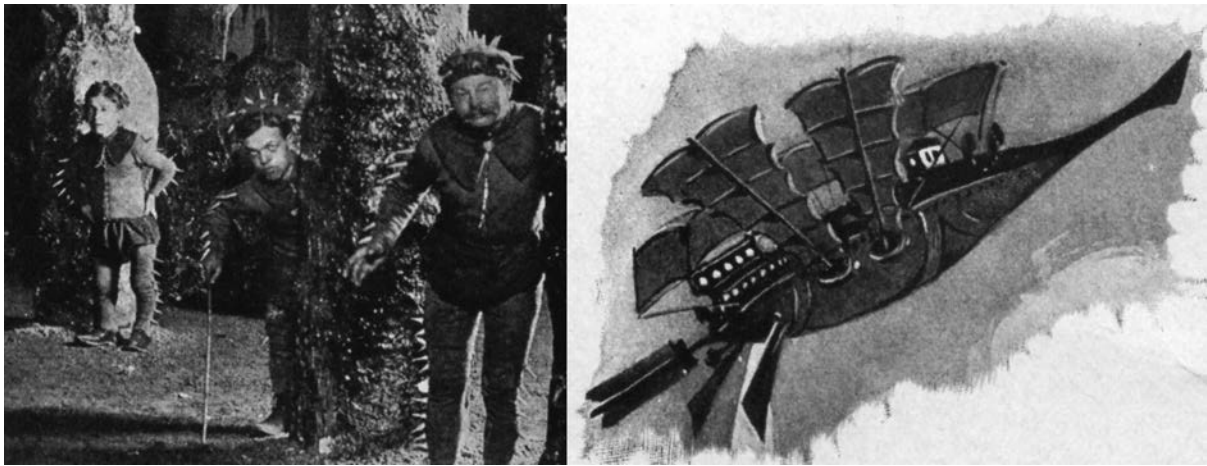


Figure 5. The ride device and the entry to A Trip to the Moon.

AND, NOW, THE PEOPLE WONDER

As Paul Greenhalgh has suggested, world's fairs were “spectacular gestures which briefly held the attention of the world before disappearing into an abrupt oblivion, victims of their own planned temporality.”²⁹ The world's fair—in part due to the high costs of expos, the expansion of popular media, the increased affordability of travel, and, most ironically, the development of the amusement and theme park industries—today occupies a much different social niche than it did in the past.³⁰ The world's fair's influence on amusement and theme parks, as well as its success in stimulating new forms of popular entertainment contributed to its eventual decline. The world's fair has now become a “world expo”—a form that will, no doubt, continue to be transformed. Such transformation may be thought of in three senses.

First, this transformation is reflected in the increasing convergence and consolidation of the two forms that has taken place within the themed entertainment industry. At major industry conferences, such as TEA SATE (Themed Entertainment Association's Storytelling, Architecture, Technology, and Experience), presenters make distinctions between the applications of themed entertainment in the differing spaces of world expos, theme parks, and other themed spaces; however, they typically focus on the challenges of the site at hand (architectural, construction, and other issues) not on the specific relevance of a narrative or thematic form to that space. In fact, as BRC Imagination Arts president Bob Rogers offered in a discussion of his firm's work on the USA Pavilion at the Shanghai World Expo 2010, the storytelling that BRC uses to create immersive experiences for guests is timeless and applicable to both theme park and world expo spaces.³¹ The narratives and resultant experiences that such firms develop for both spaces indicate a further coalescence of the two forms.

Second is the phenomenon of what Henry Jenkins notes as “convergence culture.” Jenkins suggests that contemporary popular culture is characterized by the increasing syncretism of media forms and, more importantly, the active participation of individuals in those

forms.³² Contemporary theme parks, interpretive centers, and other themed spaces exhibit a sense of “openness” as Umberto Eco noted in his study of textual forms.³³ If in the past a world’s fair exhibit offered the visitor a staid diorama that was intended only to be gazed at passively; whereas, contemporary themed spaces ask guests to become more participatory and intimately involved in their trappings. Interactive video and media spaces, augmented reality, the use of mobile media, and many other examples illustrate the sense in which contemporary themed spaces exhibit both convergence and openness.

Finally, there is the related transformation that is characteristic of a shift from the modalities specific to world’s fairs and theme parks to the modalities of what are called “lifespaces.”³⁴ The lifespace indicates a movement away from the tradition of the otherworldly, exotic, and uncanny focus of many world’s fairs and theme parks towards the tradition of an inward-focused, reflexive, and personal emphasis of many contemporary themed spaces. Instead of asking guests to see the world outside of themselves, lifespaces promote the sense that they should see inside themselves or connect with the outside world vis-a-via their own individual desires, preferences, and idiosyncrasies.

It is perhaps no surprise that the historian Henry Adams once compared the influence of world’s fairs to the power of religion.³⁵ Nor is it a surprise that many social critics continue to express concerns about the impact of theme parks on society, such as in notions of the “Disneyization of society.”³⁶ Both ideas, in much different eras, offer a sense of the real power that the fair offered to the theme park. As a total form—as an entertainment entity that combined spectacular architecture, incredible uses of material culture and technology, dramatic rides and re-creations of far-off places, and the varieties of products and brands—the world’s fair established ideological, cultural, and political precedents that went well beyond their influence on the amusements parks of Coney Island and the theme parks of the 1950s onward; the world’s fair changed culture itself. While it is difficult to predict what the theme parks and world’s expositions of the future will look like, suffice to say that the world’s fair will always be with us in one form or another.

¹For an evocative firsthand account of a visitor to the World’s Columbian Exposition see Marvin Nathan, “Visiting the World’s Columbian Exposition at Chicago in July 1893: A Personal View,” *Journal of American Culture* 19(2), Summer 1996.

²Throughout this study amusement parks will be considered those spaces of amusement of the distant past—including those of Coney Island—as well as some contemporary examples of spaces that lack themelands and forms of theming. Theme parks will be denoted as those spaces which include themelands, theming, and forms of amusement that reflect the tendencies of the parks of Disney, Six Flags, and Knotts Berry Farm from the 1950s onward.

³See also Lauren Rabinovitz, *Electric Dreamland: Amusement Parks, Movies, and American Modernity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012).

- ⁴As Allwood notes, the unusual or iconic structure became a norm in the exposition tradition. John Allwood, *The Great Exhibitions* (London: Studio Vista, 1977), 8.
- ⁵Neil Harris, *Cultural Excursions: Marketing Appetites and Cultural Tastes in Modern America* (Chicago: University Of Chicago Press, 1990), 117-18.
- ⁶Harris, *Cultural Excursions*, 118.
- ⁷Allwood, *The Great Exhibitions*, 145.
- ⁸Robert Cartmell, *The Incredible Scream Machine: A History of the Roller Coaster* (Fairview Park, OH: Amusement Park Books, 1987), 98.
- ⁹For more on the eclecticism of world's fairs in this regard, see Scott A. Lukas, *Theme Park* (London: Reaktion, 2008), 73.
- ¹⁰Many fairs drew explicit attention to this idea in their organizing missions. For example, the Exposition of 1930 (Liège, Belgium) offered the slogan "See the World in a Day."
- ¹¹See Scott A. Lukas, "Culture Sampling," available at https://www.academia.edu/2249945/Culture_Sampling.
- ¹²For more on the origins of theming see the edited collection by Scott A. Lukas, *The Themed Space: Locating Culture, Nature, and Self*. (Lanham, MD: Lexington, 2007).
- ¹³Robert W. Rydell, *All the World's a Fair: Visions of Empire at American International Expositions, 1876-1916* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984).
- ¹⁴Tony Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics* (London: Routledge, 1995), 185.
- ¹⁵The tradition of performance has come to impact many contemporary amusement spaces. See Maurya Wickstrom, *Performing Consumers: Global Capital and Its Theatrical Seductions* (New York: Routledge, 2006).
- ¹⁶Michel Foucault, *Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Vintage, 1995).
- ¹⁷Harris, *Cultural Excursions*, 118.
- ¹⁸John Kasson, *Amusing the Million: Coney Island at the Turn of the Century* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1978), 82.
- ¹⁹Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum*.
- ²⁰Allwood, *The Great Exhibitions*, 8.
- ²¹For more on this history in terms of Epcot, see Davin Heckman, *A Small World: Smart Houses and the Dream of the Perfect Day* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008).
- ²²For more on the prominence of the brand in contemporary themed spaces see Chapter 6 of Scott A. Lukas, *The Immersive Worlds Handbook: Designing Theme Parks and Consumer Spaces* (Waltham, MA: Focal, 2013).
- ²³Edo McCullough, *World's Fair Midways* (New York: Arno, 1976), 31.
- ²⁴Kasson, *Amusing the Million*, 23, Rydell, *All the World's a Fair*, 61.
- ²⁵Cartmell, *The Incredible Scream Machine*, 53.
- ²⁶McCullough, *World's Fair Midways*, 55-6.
- ²⁷C. H. Murray, *Luna Park: The Electric City by the Sea, Official program* (Brooklyn: Eagle Press, 1903), 2.

²⁸McCullough, *World's Fair Midways*, 64.

²⁹Paul Greenhalgh, *Ephemeral Vistas: The Expositions Universelles, Great Exhibitions and World's Fairs, 1851-1939* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), 1.

³⁰See Greenhalgh, *Ephemeral Vistas*, 27, Harris, *Cultural Excursions*, 129, and Reid R. Badger, *The Great American Fair: The World's Columbian Exposition and American Culture* (Chicago: Nelson Hall, 1979), xv.

³¹Robert Niles, "An Insider's Look at the New World's Fair: Shanghai World Expo 2010," *Theme Park Insider* (April 28, 2010), accessed February 15, 2012, <http://www.themeparkinsider.com/flume/201004/1901/>

³²Henry Jenkins, *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide* (New York: New York University Press, 2008). For specifics on how Jenkins envisions convergence culture impacting the world of theme parks see, Lukas, *The Immersive Worlds Handbook*, Chapter 8.

³³Umberto Eco, *The Open Work* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989).

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³⁵Rydell, *All the World's a Fair*, 3.

³⁶Alan Bryman, *The Disneyization of Society* (London: Sage, 2004).

IMAGE CREDITS

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2. Chicago Tribune Glimpses of the World's Fair (Chicago: Laird and Lee, 1893).
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7.2.

Disney and “This World’s Fair Thing”

J. P. Telotte

In his generally critical overview of Walt Disney’s career, Richard Shickel sounds a highly positive note as he recounts Disney’s contributions to the 1964-65 New York World’s Fair. The attractions Disney designed, he allows, “were, by common consent, the best exhibits of the New York World’s Fair.”¹ They were the most attractive, the most innovative, and they consistently drew the most visitors.² And yet publicly Walt downplayed the accomplishment, claiming little more than a practical rationale for his involvement. During the preparations for and publicity leading up to the event, he simply noted, “everything that we’re doing for the fair [...] we hope will eventually have their [sic] permanent home at Disneyland [...] And if that thought hadn’t been in mind, we wouldn’t have gotten into this World’s Fair thing at all.”³ This almost slighting commentary, as if the World’s Fair, despite the grandiose plans and hopes of Robert Moses and the Fair’s other planners, represented nothing special—just a “thing” to be exploited—is a bit disarming. For it not only suggests that the decision to participate was, as some critics contend, nothing more than a business decision, a careful calculation of how to finance new attractions for the Disneyland theme park then approaching its tenth anniversary and in need of updating, but it also obscures the key creative turn that these exhibits represented. For in them Walt Disney was definitively shifting his focus to develop new entertainment initiatives that were very different from the animation on which he had built the studio that bore his name, as he initiated a new technological partnership that would become the core of the company’s activities as it went on to dominate the contemporary entertainment scene.

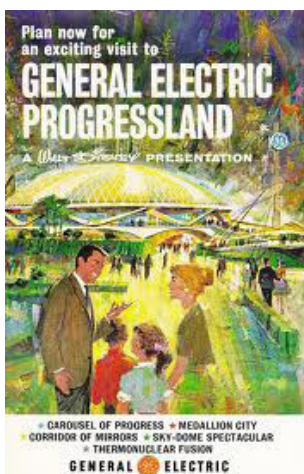


Figure 1: Progressland.

As the focus for this discussion on Disney’s trajectory, I want to examine the core attractions that the company designed for four of the major World’s Fair exhibitors. For the Ford Rotunda, Disney created the elaborate “Magic Skyway” presentation, which featured a ride aboard the Disney-designed WEDway Peplemover through Earth’s history and culminated in a model of a futuristic habitation, “Space City”; for the Pepsi-Cola-sponsored UNICEF Pavilion it provided the “It’s a Small World” ride; for the Illinois State Pavilion, the company created the “Great Moments with Mr. Lincoln” exhibit; and for the General Electric Pavilion Disney produced “Progressland,” (Fig. 1)

the central focus of which was a theatrical presentation, “The Carousel of Progress,” accompanied by “Progress City,” a diorama of a town of tomorrow (an early blueprint for Walt Disney’s original conception of EPCOT). In addition, the plaza outside of the Pepsi/UNICEF Pavilion hosted Disney’s 120-foot-tall moving sculpture, The Tower of the Four Winds (Fig. 2). So successful were these exhibits that at the close of the Fair’s second season in October 1965, Robert Moses supposedly proposed that Disney take over part of the fairgrounds as an East coast version of Disneyland—a proposal that Walt turned down, probably because his secret plan for an East coast version of the park, eventually to be named Walt Disney World, was already well underway. As Neal Gabler notes, Disney had begun exploring the possibility of building an east coast version of Disneyland as early as 1959, had started examining possible sites by 1961, and in 1963 had put together a team of his associates—Donn Tatum, Card Walker, and Joe Fowler—to spearhead the secret acquisition of land in central Florida. In fact, by the close of the New York World’s Fair on October 17, 1965, Disney was only a month away from officially announcing that the new park would be built in Orlando, so there seems little possibility that Walt ever seriously considered such a proposal by Moses.⁴



Figure 2: Pepsi/UNICEF Pavilion and the Tower of the Four Winds.

As a background to examining these exhibits, though, we first need to consider the very fact of Disney’s participation in this World’s Fair, since it speaks both to the changing nature of such events and to Disney’s increasingly significant place in American culture. To establish this context, we might note in the case of the two most famous U.S. fairs of the century, the 1933 Chicago Century of Progress Exposition and the 1939-40 New York World’s Fair, the most important event designs had

emanated from the new field of Industrial Design, embodied in such figures as Norman Bel Geddes, Henry Dreyfuss, Raymond Loewy, and Walter Dorwin Teague, all of whom would play a hand in one or both of these fairs. As Teague (who would also design three pavilions for the 1964-65 Fair) explains, the work of the industrial designer had become central to such activities because “industrial designers are supposed to understand public taste and be able to speak in the popular tongue, and because as a profession they are bound to disregard traditional forms and solutions and to think in terms of today and tomorrow.”⁵ They were, in short, seen as effective translators into popular forms of what had already become the central focus of most world’s fairs in the 1930s, the role of science and technology as they were affecting contemporary life.

An significant result of the designers’ approach in these earlier fairs was a shift in emphasis from a primary reliance on the simple “exhibition” of things, cultural accomplishments, and peoples, to what we might term modes of translation to *represent* information: models,

dioramas, dramatizations, and even films. In fact, contributing to their credentials for this sort of activity, both Bel Geddes and Dreyfus had initially worked in the area of theatrical design. Teague, who had already created a department in his design firm to produce commercial films, described his own approach as a form of “visual dramatization,”⁷ and when he was appointed to the official Design Board for the 1939 Fair, he grandly announced that he would create productions that would “make the best of Hollywood respectful.”⁸ And at least in quantity the 1939 Fair well approached that boast, as over 500 different films were made for and shown at that Fair during its two-season run.⁹

Given that move in the direction of what we might term the “cinematizing” of world’s fairs and of the world’s fair experience, Walt Disney’s involvement might seem like the next, and quite natural, step. He was demonstrably, as Teague had put it, “able to speak in the popular tongue,” and he had, albeit on a rather small scale, participated in that filmic turn of the 1939 Fair, producing an advertising cartoon for Nabisco that featured his studio’s preeminent “star” of the period Mickey Mouse. And for the 1958 Brussels Exhibition, the studio had created an innovative Circarama, or CircleVision, film,¹⁰ *America the Beautiful*, one that, biographer Neal Gabler claims, was the “hit not only of the American Pavilion, but of the whole Expo.”¹¹ But in the years immediately leading up to the New York Fair, Disney had done much to begin changing—or at least expanding—the connotations of his name, so that he was associated not only with animation or, more generally, the film industry, but with the television industry, education, the conservation movement, and, broadly speaking, innovation especially in the realm of technological entertainment.

Part of this shift in reputation was due to the innovation of the modern theme park, marked by the opening of Disneyland in 1955, while another contributor was the premier the year before of his highly praised weekly television show, originally also entitled *Disneyland*, but by the time of the World’s Fair rebranded as *The Wonderful World of Color*. For that show, Walt’s position as on-air host earned him an Emmy Award nomination for Outstanding New Personality, while the program itself, because of its perceived educational dimension, received a Peabody Award for Outstanding Youth and Children’s Programming.¹² In addition, Walt’s two highly successful documentary series, *True-Life Adventures* and *People and Places*, had brought acclaim from various conservation organizations, including the National Audubon Society. Reflecting these multiple concerns, the year before the Fair’s opening, *National Geographic*, a publication that obviously spoke to a rather different audience than that which usually attended Disney’s animated films, published a glowing tribute that began by recalling his many film accomplishments, then emphasized his contributions to the conservation movement, and finally stressed Disney’s singular *combination* of current concerns: his interest in the benefits of mass education, his sense of history, his commitment to the future, all mixed with, as Eric Smoodin remarks, an abiding focus on “honest fun.”¹³ No longer seen as either a “visual dramatist” or conventional filmmaker, then, Disney had become by the time of the 1964 Fair a national celebrity whose name evoked ties to a much more complex enterprise, one whose aim and implications we can begin to glimpse in those company contributions to the Fair, *none* of which involved cinema at all.

We might note a similar complication to that notion of “cinematizing,” for it too denotes something more complex than might seem to be suggested by just an increasing use of films at world’s fairs, as well as Disney’s own apparent turn in a different direction. As employed by the architect and media theorist Paul Virilio, that term refers not so much to film itself as to one of its impacts and continuing legacies, the increasing convergence of “reality effects,” such as those *produced by* the cinema (as well as other media), with reality itself, so that inhabitants of the contemporary world often feel as if they are actually *within* an artificial or filmic world, a “realm of fictitious topology,”¹⁴ as he puts it, where they function as “both actor and spectator of a living cinema.”¹⁵ It is a point more recently echoed in the work of film theorist and historian Francesco Casetti who describes a similar effect as one of the key legacies of “twentieth-century modernity.”¹⁶ It is that of “an immersive gaze that gives the impression of being inside the seen world, but which at the same time maintains the sense of distance.”¹⁷ For Casetti, film especially helped develop this double effect, allowing us to find a new intimacy with the modern, technologically-driven world (particularly through the immersive effects of techniques like the close-up), while also granting us the security of a sense of detachment or objectivity—by being “screened” from reality. But it is an effect that has become far more pervasive, in fact, characteristic of a variety of other technologies that have increasingly tapped into a postmodern spirit of “entertainment and play.”¹⁸

The spirit of cinematization—especially on a growing body of technologies of visualization and entertainment that convey it—strongly resonate with Disney’s own impulses developing in his work for the New York World’s Fair, as well as his increasing emphasis on *going beyond* the cinematic in the areas that Casetti notes. Certainly, the sense of being both inside and outside, of being simultaneously immersed in yet detached from the modern world, of “connecting and superimposing” a “subjective and an objective dimension”¹⁹—all while guided by or caught up in the spirit of “entertainment”—must seem familiar to any who have spent time in one of the contemporary Disney theme parks. These are, of course, immersive events themselves, great fair-like machines that allow audiences to feel both detached and part of their activity, even as they constantly work to obscure the mechanism, the terms of their deal with us. So whether it be Disneyland, Walt Disney World, Disneyland Paris, Tokyo Disney Resort, or Hong Kong Disneyland, the attraction’s emphasis is never simply on traditional amusement park rides, of which there are indeed a great number, but on the highly (and realistically) detailed, *trompe l’oeil*, immersive experience. This type of experience obviously owes much to the world of movies that Walt Disney knew best, but also speaks to his constant efforts to do something more, to always expand the very horizon of the movies and of technological entertainment, and to evolve the very nature of that cinematizing effect. Disney had transcended the flat world of conventional animation by developing a multi-plane camera; combined animation with live-action filmmaking in hybrid efforts like *The Three Caballeros* (1945), *Song of the South* (1946), or *Mary Poppins* (1964); created new, immersive approaches to seeing with the invention of his studio’s Circarama, 360-degree film technology; developed realistic robotics with his company’s signature “Audio-Animatronics” technology. He even dreamt of an Experimental Prototype Community of Tomorrow (EPCOT)—a grand-scale immersive world in which people would enter for a time, pleasurably serve as part of an experiment in technological development

and living, and then leave, making way for other observer/participants to come and live there. More than just the ordinary stuff of film, these developments were all aimed at placing viewers increasingly inside of a technologically-driven, film-like world—one that, as Andre Bazin offered, seems propelled by the “myth of total cinema,”²⁰ by a desire for perfect illusionism, perfect reproduction—and then, in a kind of “play,” allowing them to see that world, *their* world, afresh. I would suggest that we see those New York World’s Fair productions in precisely this context, as further stepping stones in this line of constant development, as explorations in the possible evolution of entertainment itself.

Yet despite this admittedly large claim, one major history of American world’s fairs practically dismisses Disney’s contribution. Rydell et al.’s *Fair America* makes only a single passing mention of Disney’s contribution to the New York World’s Fair, noting that the studio “prepared” the Ford exhibit.²¹ Perhaps the reason is that the various Disney contributions were indeed rather different from the typical world’s fair exhibits, even if one, the Ford “Magic Skyway” ride, had something of the conventional about it. In fact, it recalls the most-fabled attraction of the 1939 New York World’s Fair, the General Motors Futurama exhibit, designed by Norman Bel Geddes, in which patrons rode in special seats above a large diorama or model of a “city of tomorrow,” while listening to a narrator point out the features of that future—one set in a not-so-distant 1960. For his 1964 exhibit, Disney offered a somewhat similar—but scaled down—diorama at the end of his “Magic Skyway” ride, what he termed “space city”; however, the real attraction was there in everything that audiences experienced *before* this vision of the future. For in order to get to that brief glimpse of a very distant tomorrow, patrons were first seated in what Walt Disney, who narrated the ride himself, described as “time machines”—models of the latest Ford cars, including the then debuting Mustang sports car, that were placed on a new Disney-designed transport system, the WEDway Peoplemover—as it took riders back “many millions of years ago” to the age of Dinosaurs (Fig. 3); then forward to view “a new arrival—man,” or rather stone-age man, who was depicted in a variety of sometimes comic vignettes as he discovers fire, develops language, and invents the wheel; and then “thousands of years” into the future where “rocketships” flash overhead and visitors could view that diorama of a city centuries later. However, the pay-off here—and the real future—was obviously all that audiences saw and experienced leading up to this vision.



Figure 3: Animatronic dinosaurs.

The rather old-fashioned dioramas, plentiful at the 1939 New York Fair and appearing often enough in 1964 as well, as evidence General Motors’ updated Futurama presentation and the “Panorama Around New York” exhibit, framed their presentations in a quite specific way. They placed the audience at a distance from the exhibit, which was itself a miniature of reality, with the understanding that only

from this carefully calculated vantage—in both space and time—could the nature and scope of what the various exhibitors were presenting be properly seen and appreciated. But for Disney such distance and detachment, although implicit in the very notion of the film screen, were already becoming outmoded. Moving forward, Disney was here essentially perfecting his new Audio-Animatronic technology, recently introduced (in 1963) in a rather intimate fashion at Disneyland’s Enchanted Tiki Room attraction. With the Fair, that technology’s combination of electronic motors, sound, and animation was employed on a massive scale, with the early portions of the “Magic Skyway” showcasing their robotic products in a spectacular fashion: life-sized Brontosaurus, Triceratops, a Tyrannosaurus, and a wide array of other dinosaurs, fighting, grazing, even tending their nests, and all as accurately presented as the latest paleontological research allowed. Moreover, the audience was by no means distant or detached from these creatures; they were purposely brought right into a replica of that primeval world, there amongst the dinosaurs, almost close enough to pet them—an effect that Disney especially reinforced when he began a special, publicity-generating episode of *The Wonderful World of Color*, entitled “Disneyland Goes to the World’s Fair” (May 13, 1964), with himself petting and interacting with three of the small Audio-Animatronic dinosaurs, which he playfully named, after his popular cartoon characters, Huey, Dewey, and Louie. After experiencing the dinosaur spectacle, riders were then introduced to their own primitive ancestors, cave men, women, and children engaged in daily tasks, comic scenes, and the often dangerous struggle for existence. And unlike wax figure exhibits from a previous era, or previous world’s fairs, these figures seemed as alive as the audience, suggesting that the riders had indeed traveled back in time.

But just as significant was the nature of the audience’s movement, for it was achieved not, as riders might have initially guessed, by Ford cars driving through a static exhibit, but by the WEDway Peplemover concept. This was Disney’s new approach to mass transit that would eventually be installed in Disneyland in 1969 and at the Magic Kingdom in Florida in 1975. It represented a radical challenge to conventional mobility; in fact, we might even see in it an unexpectedly subversive strike at the entire automotive industry, thanks to its implicit suggestion of cars’ obsolescence. While at earlier fairs the auto industry had often allowed audiences to ride through exhibits in production-line vehicles, here only the bodies of those new Ford cars were used, as Disney removed the motors from them and placed the motive force in the road itself, imbuing the very landscape with the power of motion, thanks to carefully placed induction motors that moved the cars along a designated pathway. More than just a new approach to seeing—and one that would later be replicated in various Disney theme park rides—the Peplemover made possible a radically different sort of participation by conceiving of a *world* effectively wired for motion.²²

We can see another development of these two signature concerns, with Audio-Animatronics and with a world of motion, in what is probably the most famous, most successful, and also most familiar of the Disney World’s Fair exhibits: the Pepsi/UNICEF Pavilion’s “It’s a Small World.” Much more a straightforward ride than the “Magic Skyway” presentation, it is also the only exhibit that Disney, as if anticipating its success, depicted in practically

its entirety in his “Disneyland Goes to the World’s Fair” television show. While Richard Schickel in describing the ride emphasizes what he terms its “nightmarishly insistent theme song,”²³ the central thrust of this “little boat ride,” as Walt Disney simply described it²⁴ is a rather innocent affirmation: a salute to the children of the world and their commonality, a point that was designed to closely ally with the Fair’s overall theme of “Peace Through Understanding.” In fact, that “insistent” song resulted in part from a direct effort to address the Fair’s theme, for Disney’s initial plan to have nearly 300 Audio-Animatronic children singing the national anthems of their respective countries only produced, as Neal Gabler notes, a “cacophony” of different sounds, a problem that was solved when Disney commissioned studio songwriters Richard and Robert Sherman to produce a song that *all* the children could conceivably sing—and that would thus effectively represent their commonality. The end product is a ride that emphasizes—and constantly re-emphasizes, particularly through its figures who, for all of their colorful and different costumes, generally look alike—a growing global culture into which riders are happily inserted. In this case the Audio-Animatronic technology would allow not only for figures who could move, play, and sing, but also for a great numbers of figures who could be easily tailored and colored to fit the various lands, thereby allowing any visitor to find some element of cultural identity and to experience what Casetti describes as “a full and active,” completely modernist space, as “the things that take up this space thoroughly determine it, modeling its shapes and fields of energy.”²⁵

In fact, the overarching theme here of “Understanding” and globalization draws much of its power not from the song’s reiteration by those similar representatives from many lands, but from our own immersion in the highly stylized world designed largely by artist Mary Blair. For “It’s a Small World” is, after all, a trip in the tradition of so many earlier “dark rides,” a boat journey that takes audiences deeper and deeper into another world—a kind of affirmative version of Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*—until we seem, thanks to the visual stylization, the carefully controlled point of view, the over-saturated colors, the overwhelming number of seemingly alive Audio-Animatronic figures, *and* that song’s hypnotic repetition, to be completely caught up in another, truly unified world, as if we had crossed into an uncanny realm—or a kind of “magic kingdom.” That crossing effect, I would suggest, is actually at the core of both the ride’s enormous appeal—an appeal attested to by its replication in *all* of the subsequent Disney theme parks—and the somewhat troubling fallout that some, such as Schickel, describe. It is, very simply, a powerfully immersive experience in the tradition of an emotionally involving cinema, yet also an exhibition that almost announces its ideological thrust, allowing us to stand a bit outside of its orbit and to appreciate—but not (despite Schickel) easily resist—its insistent but entertaining presentation of unity, of a global commonality.

In marked contrast to the hundreds of stylized—and less detailed—human figures of “It’s a Small World,” “Great Moments with Mr. Lincoln,” the Illinois Pavilion’s signal attraction, operated on a very different, even intensely human scale. It offered audiences a seated, life-sized Audio-Animatronic Lincoln who would look around at the audience, arise, and with



Figure 4: Mr. Lincoln.

because of its potential cost.²⁶ That element of cost, reportedly \$600,000 just for Lincoln for the two years of the Fair's run, also initially blocked the Illinois project. Only Disney's personal "introduction" of Robert Moses to the robot when he visited the Disney studio—an introduction in which the prototype Lincoln reportedly stood and shook Moses' hand—ensured that Illinois would have its centerpiece, as Moses then promised to underwrite \$250,000 of the cost,²⁷ a benefit extended to no other Fair exhibitor.

But this exhibit was more than just a testing out of the new Audio-Animatronic technology—which, as we have noted, was already featured in Disneyland's Enchanted Tiki Room and in each of Disney's other World's Fair presentations. Rather, we might see it as helping to gauge what Casetti refers to as "the limits of the image" and thus to determine how much the spectators could actually be "immersed in the performance,"²⁸ won over by its reality effect rather than by the cute stylizations of "It's a Small World." Certainly, the Lincoln prototype had worked this more-than-cinematic magic on Moses, drawing from him both approval and financing. And in the show's presentation, clearly the emphasis was on authenticity or realism, as the World's Fair guidebook explicitly underscores. It promised visitors that they would see "mannerisms characteristic of the great Civil War President," and assured them that the "dimensions for the figure duplicate the physical statistics found in biographies; the facial features were taken from Lincoln's life mask. As the Official Guide reports, the figure is capable of more than 250,000 combinations of action, including smiles, frowns, and gestures."²⁹ And that dedication to a new level of lifelike appearance and action paid off in a new level of impact; as a reporter for the *New York Daily News* allowed, "Those who have seen Lincoln 'come to life' are stricken with something akin to awe."³⁰

Yet that response was by no means universal. While Schickel would with some obvious technical appreciation catalogue several dimensions of this achievement—noting that the Audio-Animatronic Lincoln was capable of 48 different body movements, 17 of the head, and a wide variety of facial expressions—he ultimately termed it a product of Disney's "technical mania" and even judged the Lincoln figure to be "a ridiculous contraption."³¹

Moreover, he saw the development of such technological creations as constituting a desecration of art: “Here is the dehumanization of art in its final extremity.”³² While that judgment is somewhat curious, since he never indicates just what sort of art—the theater, sculpture, waxworks—is being so *dehumanized*, his linkage of the presentation to “art” is, I would suggest, very much on target. For if Disney had in the past been open to charges of trying to popularize “high” art, as he was most obviously in the case of *Fantasia’s* (1940) treatment of classical music, he was here unabashedly striving for other artistic effects, effects that the common person—or fairgoer—could easily appreciate. In this instance, he was indeed exploring the possibilities for a new sort of technological theater, one that took audiences a step beyond the normal world of film, toward the realization of that Bazinian “myth of total cinema” wherein we find ourselves in a new intimacy with, and thereby able to gain a new understanding of, reality itself.

With the General Electric “Carousel of Progress” we see a further dimension of that transformation of the artistic experience on which Disney was experimenting in these World’s Fair creations. If in some ways a more conventional example of “theater”—with an introduction, a conclusion, and a show proper divided into four “Acts,” each occurring on a proscenium-arch-type stage, and each involving a cast of “performers” who present their “play” toward a traditional, seated audience—it is a theatrical experience that has been rethought through technological means. As the *Official Guide* describes it, here “life-sized, three-dimensional, animated human figures move, talk, laugh and act out the story of electricity in the home from the Gay ‘90s to the present,”³³ with, of course, a special emphasis on the various General Electric appliances that, in the four periods originally depicted (the 1890s, 1920s, 1940s, and 1960s), stand in for a certain type of electrical progress within the domestic realm and, more broadly, within western cultural life (Fig. 5).



Figure 5: The Carousel of Progress.

If that measure of progress is open to criticism—and here we might just note Stephen Fjellman’s recent charge that the “Carousel” is an “inordinately silly and self-serving set of tableaux, sandwiched between an unctuous and annoying musical refrain, that purports to show how electricity has brought ‘progress’ to the home during the twentieth century”³⁴—the manner of its presentation is nonetheless noteworthy. For the Audio-Animatronic, multi-generational family that acts out and comments upon nearly a century of electrical progress, partly measured out through everyday appliances, performs for

an audience that is itself in motion and effectively technologized. The auditorium—or to be precise, six separate auditoriums—revolves around the four stages on which the different acts are presented, as well as the introductory and concluding presentations. This multi-stage and multi-auditorium approach allows for a maximum efficiency experience, since the Audio-Animatronic figures that need no rest, that do not have to change costumes, that do not have to gauge and play to audience reactions, and that never become bored from a mind-numbing repetition of the same lines—can constantly perform for one segment of the audience, while another, new audience, is constantly being loaded into the emptying auditorium segments (with approximately 240 people entering every four minutes). The effect is to render the viewers as part of an effective entertaining/entertainment assembly line.

And at the same time, this approach masks what is ultimately a ride itself, for it binds the audience up in a world of technologically-propelled motion, as a kind of analogue to the passing of years and the technological changes that they are witnessing. Here we are embraced by that technological entertainment, even as it asks, Fjellman's comments notwithstanding, in a rather pleasant way for us to embrace *it* and, as its Sherman brothers-created theme song offers, a technologically-delivered "Great Big Beautiful Tomorrow." But that doubleness is, as we earlier noted, fundamental to this new sort of theater, to this postmodern entertainment experience, which situates the audience, as Virilio offers, simultaneously in the roles of "both actor and spectator," or renders them, as Casetti suggests, both immersed and detached. Here we can simultaneously enjoy our carousel ride (not quite astride but certainly driven by many technological horses) and observe/absorb the lessons afforded by this robotic family—lessons disarmingly offered up in that spirit of "entertainment."

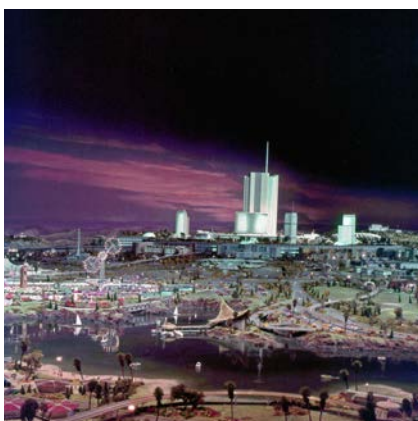


Figure 6: Progress City.

How effectively these lessons would be presented, and indeed how appealingly the new entertainment technologies driving them would be incorporated, remains an open question. Certainly, the Walt Disney Company—if not Walt Disney himself—would eventually try to integrate them all in the company's theme park business. Thus the WEDway Peoplemover from Ford's "Magic Skyway" presentation operated in Disneyland from 1967 to 1995, and it continues to function as part of the Tomorrowland Transit Authority in Walt Disney World's Magic Kingdom, constantly moving people above and through Tomorrowland, where they can even glimpse a part of that Progress City diorama (Fig. 6), now fitted into a section of the "Stitch's Great Escape" attraction. The Audio-Animatronic dinosaurs from that show have also populated several later Disney attractions, and for the last decade have been the central feature of EPCOT's "Ellen's Energy Adventure." "It's a Small World," with its evocation of universal innocence and brotherhood, has become one of the signature

Disney attractions with versions of the ride now installed at each of the Disney theme parks around the world, further advancing that original theme of globalization. A duplicate of the Illinois Pavilion's "Great Moments with Mr. Lincoln" would open at Disneyland in 1965 and remain, with some changes, a nearly constant feature of that park. However, its real legacy can be seen in the Magic Kingdom's "Hall of Presidents" show which, while showcasing Lincoln, brings that figure together with convincing Audio-Animatronic depictions of every other American president, resulting in a new kind of technological theater experience, and one that is updated with each new presidential inauguration. And after its run at the World's Fair, the "Carousel of Progress" played at Disneyland from 1967 until 1973, before being installed in the Magic Kingdom's Tomorrowland, with its 1960s-era final act eventually updated to a contemporary scene. However, with the exception of the "Great Moments with Mr. Lincoln" show for Disneyland, Walt Disney himself saw none of these later developments. And with his death in 1966 and the subsequent, often pedestrian installation of these technological wonders, it is difficult to claim that any of them lived up to the promises they seemed to explore and offer for future technological entertainment.

We might note that, while it was never employed as originally planned in EPCOT, the WEDway Peoplemover did find practical application in 1981 when it was installed at the Houston International Airport to move passengers between terminals. And since 2005, as part of the Disney company's new "Living Character Initiative," sophisticated, computer-driven Audio-Animatronics have demonstrated, on a limited basis, the possibility for new immersive, interactive experiences at Disney parks around the world. Lucky the Dinosaur, a free-roving Audio-Animatronic figure and distant relative of the Ford "Magic Skyway" creatures, has made irregular appearances at various Disney theme parks, as has the more recent Muppets Mobile Lab, a similar free-moving presentation involving two popular Muppets characters, Dr. Bunsen Honeydew and Beaker. As with Lucky, this mobile attraction seems aimed at developing the trajectory we have noted in the World's Fair attractions, as evidence the comments of Disney Imagineer Christopher Holm: "It's really interaction in a whole new way for Disney characters, and our guests, because it's up close, it's personal, it's in real time [...] That's a very, very different show presence than any of our previous 'living' characters [...] those are really theater experiences. There is a barrier."³⁵ Finally, it seems like the company has again begun to address the challenges of mobility and realism, of transcending the conventional entertainment experience.

Still, in the 1964 New York World's Fair we can see Disney drawing upon some of the primary lessons of what we have termed cinematization—lessons learned through forty years of work within the film industry. These are the lessons of character and movement, of the illusion of involvement in the depicted world as well as of our seemingly inevitable detachment from it, as Casetti notes. But also, and more significantly, we see Disney trying to exploit that "cinematized" world and to push beyond its boundaries, just as he had over the years attempted to do with a variety of other technological developments—by introducing sound to cartoons, by innovating three-strip Technicolor film, by developing a multiplane

camera to add a new depth illusion to animation, even by embracing television at a time when the rest of the film industry saw it as an imminent threat to its very existence. In the instance of the World's Fair, Disney was not simply demonstrating to East Coast audiences what the theme park experience was like—as many economic interpreters of the Disney empire have suggested—but already beginning to push beyond that waystation of modern technological entertainment, exploring in what ways his new robotic and transportation technologies, his new tools of depiction and audience immersion, might open up unique vistas of both entertainment and life itself.

Indeed, as these exhibits already point towards the planned Magic Kingdom of Florida and its far more ambitious component, EPCOT, we might recall an observation from Joe Fowler, head of construction for both Disneyland and the Magic Kingdom. He recounts Walt Disney's admission that "the amusement park would be the 'weenie' [or lure] and that EPCOT would be the real big" project, the thing about which he "was so intense that it bordered on obsession."³⁶ With the New York World's Fair and its various exhibits, all of them addressing elements of that modernist attitude observed and described by Virilio and Casetti, we can see glimpses of something more than just another "thing," the quick economic opportunity that some critics suggest. They point us in the direction of Disney's vaulting ambitions in his last years—ambitions to change the very nature of entertainment and even, given his description of the planned EPCOT as "the city of the future,"³⁷ of contemporary life. With these tools, Bazin's "myth of total cinema" might finally be realized through a world of free and easy motion, a world where any place or event might be staged for our entertainment and better understanding. The distance and detachment that were, for many, the unfortunate accompaniment of the modernist world, would become a choice rather than a condition, and our easy immersion and involvement in that world a new pleasure. Of course, Disney's death slightly more than a year after the Fair's close cut short that dream, although those exhibits linger on—in that historical episode of *Wonderful World of Color* and in the continued presence of most of those developments, even nearly fifty years later, throughout the various Disney "worlds," "lands," and "kingdoms." There they stand not as leftover "things," but as a kind of blueprint of his "real big" plans for the very future of technological entertainment.

¹Richard Schickel, *The Disney Version*, (New York: Avon, 1968), 14.

²For commentary on the popularity of the Disney-designed attractions see Steven Watts, *The Magic Kingdom: Walt Disney and the American Way of Life*, (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1997), 418.

³Kathy Merlock Jackson, ed., *Walt Disney: Conversations*, (Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 2006), 112.

⁴Neal Gabler, *Walt Disney: The Triumph of the American Imagination*. (New York: Knopf, 2006).

⁵Walter Dorwin Teague, "Building the World of Tomorrow." *Architectural Forum* 26 (April 1939): 126-27.

⁶Robert W. Rydell et al. in their *Fair America* give special attention to the racial/imperial thrust of most early world's fairs, but especially those staged in America prior to World War II. They note the repetition of exhibits or entire pavilions devoted to "anthropology" and to eugenics. See Robert W. Rydell, John E. Findling, and Kimberly D. Pelle. *Fair America: World's Fairs in the United States*, (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2000), 65-66.

⁷Roland Marchand, "The Designers Go to the Fair, I: Walter Dorwin Teague and the Professionalization of Corporate Industrial Exhibits, 1933-1940," in *Design History: An Anthology*, ed. Dennis P. Doordan, (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1995), 97.

⁸Ibid., 100.

⁹Folke T. Kihlstedt, "Utopia Realized: The World's Fairs of the 1930s," in *History, Technology, and the American Future*, ed. Joseph J. Corn. (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1986), 110.

¹⁰Circarama, also known as CircleVision 360, is one of the many Disney efforts at trying to move beyond the restrictions of conventional cinematic practice. Developed by Ub Iwerks, it offers audiences a circular image, usually photographed by nine cameras and projected by nine projectors. It has been in use in the various Disney theme parks since 1955.

¹¹Gabler, 574.

¹²For background on Disney's move into television, as well as the links between the television show and the theme park of the same name, see J. P. Telotte, *Disney TV*, (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2004).

¹³Eric Smoodin, "Introduction: How to Read Walt Disney," in *Disney Discourse: Producing the Magic Kingdom*, ed. Eric Smoodin, (New York: Routledge, 1994), 7.

¹⁴Paul Virilio, *War and Cinema: The Logistics of Perception*, trans. Patrick Camiller, (London: Verso, 1989), 46.

¹⁵Ibid., 49.

¹⁶Francesco Casetti, *Eye of the Century: Film, Experience, Modernity*, trans. Erin Larkin and Jennifer Pranolo, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 5.

¹⁷Ibid., 4.

¹⁸Ibid., 5,

¹⁹Ibid., 66.

²⁰Andre Bazin, *What is Cinema?* Vol. 1. Trans. Hugh Gray. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), 22.

²¹Rydell, 108.

²²The WEDway Peoplemover was slated for use as key component in the original conception of EPCOT, where it was planned to move workers from a transportation hub to various places of work and business in the central "Community." Disney also, with only limited success, attempted to market the system through a new branch of the Walt Disney Company, Community Transportation Services Division.

²³Schickel, 284.

²⁴Quoted in Gabler, 582.

²⁵Castetti, 152.

²⁶Gabler, 578.

²⁷Gabler, 580.

²⁸Casetti, 183, 184.

²⁹*Official Guide: New York World's Fair 1964/65* (New York: Time Inc., 1964), 186.

³⁰Quoted in Watts, 417.

³¹Schickel, 285.

³²Schickel, 287.

³³Official Guide, 90.

³⁴Stephen M. Fjellman, *Vinyl Leaves: Walt Disney World and America* (Boulder: Westview, 1992), 216.

³⁵Quoted in Scott Powers, "Muppets Go Mobile," *Orlando Sentinel*, Aug. 22, 2007. http://articles.orlandosentinel.com/2007-08-22/business/MUPPETLAB22_1_muppet-mobile-lab-emily-evans-walt-disney. Accessed July 1, 2011.

³⁶Quoted in Watts, 424.

³⁷Quoted in Watts, 422.

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7.3.

“Fun at the Fair: The New York World’s Fair 1964/1965”

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END OF AN ERA

Like a cymbal crash or fireworks finale, the 1964/1965 World’s Fair in New York was a spectacular flash of cultural excitement. Burning brighter than life for a short while and leaving lasting memories for millions, the fair ultimately earned a collective shrug from more serious critics of culture and history. The ‘64/’65 Fair was, by many measures, the last of the truly great world’s fairs. Moreover, its stature and shortfalls signaled the undoing of the world’s fair concept. Equal parts unrivaled spectacle and un-realized dream, the fair was a mirror of the changing times. This New York Fair embodied the liminal membrane between the last vestiges of World War II optimism mixed with cultural conservatism and the rise of a new form of American consciousness. In this sense, the ‘64/’65 Fair was a threshold between the America which was, and in many respects, the America to come. Emblazoned with images ranging from undersea resorts to world peace, computerized education and a future accelerated by science, this fair stood firm with one foot in American can-do progressivism and the other in pie-in-the-sky hopefulness.

Opening in April of 1964 on the 646-acre site of the 1939 New York World’s Fair, the ‘64/’65 Fair would go down in the record books as the most popular of the world’s fairs and one of its most contentious. The *LA Times* called it “a billion-dollar monument to modern man, his space-age gadgetry and his yearning for a better life.”¹ Managed by the intractable Robert Moses, the fair was built following a vision of a Father Knows Best notion of the country that was rapidly dissolving under the pressures of the sexual revolution, civil rights, and the Vietnam War. Despite record-setting attendance that put the number of visitors between 50 million and 52 million people, the fair fell short of the projected 70 million guests and lost millions of dollars as a result. Plans for a promised park to rival the scope and beauty of New York’s Central Park went unfinished thanks to the red ink, and the ‘64/’65 World’s Fair entered history as the end of an era for such global events. As fair historian Lawrence Samuel summed it up:

Overshadowed by its financial losses, European no-shows, heavy commercial orientation, and, above all, the looming and rather sinister presence of its president, Robert Moses, the fair has been summarily dismissed by critics as the world’s fair that permanently put an end to major world’s fairs.²

Other critics have been even less kind: “A large, rambling, unfocused exposition, the New York fair attracted far more attention for its perpetual financial woes than for anything it had to offer visitors.”³

Miscues by the authoritarian Fair Corporation president Moses included a conflict with The International Exhibitions Bureau, the governing body of world’s fairs, which resulted in many countries, including the United Kingdom, opting out of the un-sanctioned event. Decidedly out-of-date decisions around fair entertainment obstructed the event’s financial possibilities, as well. Histories of popular culture note that the Beatles flew over the fair in 1965 en route to perform at nearby Shea Stadium. While Moses’ favorite musician Guy Lombardo headlined at the fair, the closest the Fab Four came to the event was a display in its wax museum.

Of course, these sour notes might have sounded with less clang had the fair attracted another 20 million people and reached its lofty financial goals. Instead, orthodox history describes a bankrupt event limping off the world’s stage in 1965, ending an era in world’s fair history. Samuel, however, offers a more nuanced perspective. Certainly in its popularity, with perhaps as many as 52 million visitors strolling through the grounds during its eighteen-month existence, the fair stood for much more than bloated egos and commercial optimism. Something about the New York Fair was compelling.

Filling in the gaps with the most important part of the story—what people could see, hear, eat, and, most important, learned there—tells us that the fair was not a failure at all, but rather a major success, offering millions of people a wonderful, unforgettable experience unlike any other.⁴

In Samuel’s view, an understanding of how the fair was appreciated by its throngs of attendees and remembered fondly by the generation that it helped to shape remains one of the event’s most enduring legacies. Understanding the fair in this way, however, requires some context that can better explain the unique appeal of this event for fairgoers. Whereas large-scale spectacle, jingoism, and the exotic encapsulate much of the global world’s fair phenomenon, the 1964/1965 event was different. What was it about the New York World’s Fair that was different? What feature was exaggerated so much as to mark the experience for so many? I suggest that what made the 1964/1965 New York World’s Fair unique was its focus on *fun*, a theoretical concept I will define and frame. Then, I will use this notion of fun to analyze a single important artifact from the fair: a hardcover souvenir book over a hundred pages long, designed as the ultimate memento summarizing the event.

FINDING FUN

Suggesting that the New York World’s Fair of 1964/1965 could be described as fun seems both problematic and obvious. Certainly, as sites for entertainment, all world’s fairs appeal to a sense of fun. Still, suggesting that the loose concept of fun adequately captures something important about a specific fair bears further scrutiny. The notion of fun itself requires some theoretical remediation prior to its application to the concept of the New York Fair.

As a term, “fun” has its roots around three hundred years ago in the English concept of a cheat, trick, or hoax, reaching its more contemporary meaning of amusement or frivolity during the past one hundred years. And while fun as frivolity remains a popular sense of the term, for Americans the notion of fun seems to have been elevated into an aesthetic category of its own. Rather than act as a synonym for the frivolous, fun signals a break from the ordinary, a gentle revolt against the orthodox, a mild transgression and a pleasure unique to itself. This shift in perception of fun coincides with the growth of leisure time for the middle class, and the consumerist culture that went with it. Related phenomena include everything from boardwalk amusements to home entertainment devices such as the phonograph to mass-produced toys, especially board games. It is worth noting the irony in this shift: the United States remains a country founded by Puritans who, to a large extent, shunned such amusements as wasteful and non-productive at best, and sinful at worst.

A full explication of the concept of fun at this point is outside the scope of this paper. However, thanks to fundamental work by Gregory Bateson we can operationalize the notion of fun. Fun, as it is applied in this study, finds a definition in the context of Bateson’s landmark essay on play, “A Theory of Play and Fantasy.”⁵ Bateson’s insight into the nature of play stemmed from an unexpected insight during a visit to the zoo. While observing the communication signals traded by monkeys in their cage, Bateson noticed a clear form of meta-communication used by the primates during play. While the animals were clearly signing the mood signs for combat they also were recognizably playing. In other words, the animals were communicating about a base instinct—fighting—but doing so using a rich set of contextual signs that made it clear the actions of fighting were not meant to be understood literally. As Bateson detailed, describing the structure of this kind of communication:

These actions, in which we now engage, do not denote what would be denoted by those actions which these actions denote. The playful nip denotes the bite, but it does not denote what would be denoted by the bite.⁶

In this analysis, play becomes a form of communication and an experience shared within a very specific kind of meta-communicative frame. Play does not simply serve itself, as Johan Huizinga had suggested.⁷ Rather, play carries a series of messages about the actions used to communicate the message. For Bateson, messages about messages were an important evolutionary development. Meta-communication allowed animals to think about messages rather than simply react. In play comes a critical evolutionary development that in many ways defines the potentials and capabilities of higher-order animals.

What Bateson’s insight about play left out was some description of the pleasure of play. Or as Huizinga asked, “what actually is the fun of playing?”⁸ Perhaps without recognizing it, Bateson’s classic formulation of play also provided a clear definition of fun. The “bite that is not a bite” construction creates a logical paradox that is understandable to the players.

Furthermore, there is a pleasure resulting from this paradox, from what Brian Sutton-Smith describes as “the ambiguity of play.”⁹ What neither Bateson, Sutton-Smith, nor others bothered to do was to name the pleasure that results from play, from the ambiguous and paradoxical structure of the bite that is not a bite.

Following Huizinga’s hint, we can say simply that fun is the pleasure that arises from an experience of this is/is-not construction. Huizinga asks, “What is the fun in play?” We can now answer: Fun. Play, then, becomes one of the primary means by which we create this sense of fun: acting, making meaning, pretending, and mimicking things that are meant exactly not as they are.

When fun is cast in this light, the relationship between play, games and fun seems evident. But fun in the is/is-not construction occurs in a broad variety of other contexts. The cinema, with its ability to whisk people out of reality, even as they stay rooted to their theater chairs munching popcorn, is one popular form of the is/is-not. Movies are fun, in this sense, because they allow us to experience things as if they were real, when clearly they are not real. Disneyland’s mountains that are not mountains, jungles that are not jungles, and rides that take you in a circle—destinations that are not destinations—are a few examples of the kinds of fun implied in Bateson’s analysis. More important to the current study, fun can also easily be mapped onto other spaces and experiences at events like the New York World’s Fair.

While this definition of fun may not satisfy all senses of the notion of fun in all of its possible contexts, it does provide a useful lens for talking about something like the New York World’s Fair. If Robert Moses intended to erect a bubble of reassurance in a rapidly changing world, then the presence of the is/is-not concept in the fundamental structure of the fair could explain some of its long-standing attraction. As many have pointed out,¹⁰ the power of the ‘64/’65 fair is better understood in its long-term impacts rather than in terms of its short-term commercial goals. If a divisive culture of the time was questioning white, male homogeneity, then perhaps viewing the New York World’s Fair as a fair floating in the ambiguities of fun can also help explain its current relevance. Rather than merely reflect a naïve nostalgia for an empire at its nadir, the New York World’s Fair also structurally embodied the culture’s own evolutionary moment—the ambiguities, uncertainties, and reinterpretations of cultural structure that would soon follow.

ARTIFACT

To capture the zeitgeist of such a monumental event, even one that lasted for a scant eighteen months, remains a challenge. No one thing or perspective can completely compress the scope and scale of the event, much less the experience of the millions of visitors who flocked through the fair’s turnstiles. But if an effort to crystallize that moment in time, even partially, is possible, then a look at an artifact created for the purpose must have value. In this case, a single artifact claims position as the ultimate document of the fair, an official summary of what the fair was about.



Figure 1. Souvenir Book Cover.

The 300+ page, \$1.00 Official Guide provided maps and detailed descriptions of every feature of the fair. Scattered among the ample advertisements for alcohol and fair attractions were ads for the Official Souvenir Book (Fig. 1).¹¹ At only \$2.50, the Souvenir book promised, “A permanent hardcover book representing the entire spectacle in color.”¹² It is this artifact from the New York World’s Fair that promises the most concise digest of the event, a tightly edited set of full-color memories meant to signify in a few pages the enormity of the fair and to provide an ideal set of points of reference for future memories of a visit.

And if the 1964/65 New York World’s Fair was a spectacle, at least in part on a Batesonian notion of fun, then in this Souvenir Book we should be able to find clear evidence of fun at the fair. Even a quick glance at the Souvenir Book’s table of contents reveals a strong inclination toward the idea of fun. The primary sections of the book divide into the key topics such as background material on the fair’s development, science, history, art, the home, New York, and an appendix meant to appeal to children. Notably, the table of contents also lists a major section dedicated to the subject of fun.



Figure 2. Fun at the Fair.

The Souvenir Books belies any claim that fun was a subtle theme at the fair with the section, “A World of Fun at the Fair.” The book “revels in the razzle-dazzle of all the world’s amusements.”¹³ On the following pages sit photographs of elaborate French puppets, twirling Flamenco dancers as well as performers from Hong Kong, the Philippines, and Bali (Fig. 2). If, as the Souvenir Book text suggests, entertainment is the equivalent of fun, then the fair’s kind of fun was of an exotic other, something removed from more mainstream American forms of amusement. The fair’s fun was, in a digest, entertainment wholly unlike the kind of entertainment the American public would expect. That is, entertainment that is not entertainment. Fun.



Figure 3. More Fun at the Fair.

Descriptive text details the relationship between fun and entertainment is made again but with somewhat more clarity. In “Fun at the Fair: From Porpoises to Pheneas Fogg,” the publication boasts a series of photographs including Florida’s porpoise show, a couple of grinning figure skaters, a pair of underwater dance performers, and a two-page spread featuring a production of “Around the World in 80 Days” – a Guy Lombardo musical version of the famous film performed “under the stars and on the water” (Fig. 3).¹⁴ Of course, this foray into the subject of fun is equivalent to the notion of entertainment. Each of the attractions selected for this section focuses on theatrical shows. Even so, the collection of examples comes closer to a Batesonian notion of fun than we might first expect. Although these are all theatrical productions at heart, one features an animal as the star, one is presented unconventionally under water, one is “on the water,” and the final is an “Ice-Travaganza.”

In other words, entertainment at the fair was exaggerated, unconventional, and in many respects not-theater in the usual Broadway model. Where more traditional forms of theater certainly adhere to the is/is-not construction of fun, the New York Fair pursued a further exaggeration. The fair's entertainment was entertainment that was not entertainment, in a sense. Through the exaggeration of animal actors and aquatic settings, the fair's brand of entertainment produced a paradoxical frame around the more recognizable traditional modes of the performing arts. This kind of contradicting, double-meaning, meta-communicative ambiguity perfectly reflects the play concept as envisioned by Bateson.

In fact, this paradox of form is seen in many attractions described in the Souvenir Book. For instance, in a section dedicated to the history of America, the presentation of a full-scale replica of Columbus's ship, the Santa Maria, seems an earnest effort to recreate an authentic historical artifact. The fact that it is docked at the Lake Amusement Area changes the frame significantly, however. This latter-day Santa Maria is an attraction, a historical artifact that is not an artifact, history that is not history, a perfectly ambiguous material structure that is fun. It was an authentic fake, an object meant to contradict its own claims to authenticity. As if to make this question of authenticity even clearer, the facing page presents a photograph of an original map of the world drawn by Juan Vespucci in 1526, an actual historical artifact. The Santa Maria, a model ship blown up to full size, such that the book describes it as a "full-size replica," demonstrates the duplicity here. This is the Santa Maria of childhood textbooks that is not the Santa Maria. It is a structure that evokes the sense of fun in the fairgoer.

The Souvenir Book repeatedly presents this kind of paradoxical juxtaposition of authentic artifact with fun object. The history section, for example, continues with a somber statue of George Washington sharing a page layout with a cute, miniature model of the winter at Valley Forge. Disney's animatronic Abe Lincoln leads another photo spread shared by historic artifacts from the history of Buffalo Bill in the Montana exhibit and period images of immigrants arriving at Ellis Island. Even an essay entitled "A Historian's View of the Present 'Challenge to Greatness'" by former special assistant to the president Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. shares its serious argument with a series of silly cartoon illustrations. And lest the reader think that images such as the map of the United States standing with a goofy grin, arms dangling, were an ad hoc addition by the book's layout editors, Schlesinger seems to understand his context: "As the illustrations on these pages show, the exhibits at the 1964/1965 New York's World Fair present this record in panorama."¹⁵

Rather than contradict the more serious themes of the fair such as American dominance, technological optimism, or capitalistic boosterism, the fun merely helps frame the more sonorous themes. Not only was the fair a machine for generating fun, the fun was integral to the core of the fair's identity. As the guide makes clear, visitors to the fair were, at every turn, confronted with the paradox of the is/is-not is construction. Like a magic trick that is only fun when you know full well it is a trick, the fair gleefully mixed the real with the

fake, the earnest with the amusing, and the serious with the silly. Not surprisingly, this is/is-not parallelism of the history section shows up in other parts of the book as well. While describing the technology of microfilm and the most recent advances in automated teaching machines on one side of a two-page spread, the facing page is dedicated to a Sherlock Holmes-themed, IBM-sponsored puppet show about binary logic created by iconic twentieth-century designers Charles and Ray Eames.

The section entitled “The Miracle of Life” surveyed the world of biological science with equal parts scientific diagrams and playful displays. A young girl running joyfully through a field of giant plastic dinosaurs on the fairgrounds says more about the event’s commitment to fun than it does the desire to teach real science. Two additional pages round out the life section with scenes from the popular Disney-designed attraction the “Magic Skyway” in the Ford Rotunda. While the Souvenir Book skips showing the complex ride system that placed visitors inside one of Ford’s new convertible car models that was then hauled through a 3D history of humankind, the book does linger on two of the animatronic scenes of cavemen living and lecturing in their ancient homes. Again, the almost surreal presentation of science and history as a comical, robotic theater signs a form of paradoxical communication more in line with Bateson’s play than Francis Bacon’s pure rationalism. The Disney ride, much like General Motors’ Futurama display, mixed science with showmanship to create something that was neither strictly entertainment nor education—anticipating the edutainment craze to come. Indeed, Futurama, a reprised and updated version of the 1939 New York Fair attraction featuring dioramas depicting life in the future in undersea hotels and science fiction-inspired platform cities in the jungle, seems perfectly toy-like in its Souvenir Book photographs.

These juxtapositions of images and ideas present the most obvious constructions of fun in the Souvenir Book, and provide a clear picture of the fair’s fun basis. But even the introductory text provided by Robert Moses makes it clear that fun, the is/is-not construction, was as critical to the fair’s nature as the more commonly described themes of national and corporate promotion, education and leisure.

We cannot prevent the maker of condiments from building his pavilion in the form of a pickle, or the business-machine manufacturer from putting up a structure in the form of a huge typewriter or computer, or the brewer from preferring a bottling plant to a dance hall. We do not propose to compete in cultural matters with the established, permanent centers, theaters and museums in Manhattan, with the experience and facilities to do things better than we...¹⁶

In this passage, Moses claims something unusual for a world’s fair. Typically a fair promotes an agenda that supports cultural norms, educates the masses, or even argues for a specific meaning encoded in the fair’s exhibits and attractions. Moses’s laissez faire attitude seems odd when considered in parallel with the obvious culture-making and culture-supporting role that all world’s fairs afford. As the authors of *Fair America* note:

Were world's fairs held simply to amuse the masses? Are they best regarded as cultural ephemera, money-losing propositions, for the most part, that, for all their visual excitement, have no long-term significance? [...] To say that world's fairs have exerted a formative influence on the way Americans have thought about themselves and the world in which they live probably understates the importance of those expositions.¹⁷

Certainly Moses, as the fair's central architect, understood this, yet he used some of his limited text in the Souvenir Book to playfully contradict the idea. Of course, Moses's rhetoric matches the reality of an event that had buildings shaped like pickles alongside such popular attractions as Michelangelo's *Pieta*, a sculpture that left the Vatican for the first time since 1499 to travel to the fair and which the Souvenir Book memorializes. The fair could thus be both silly and sublime. And in this sublime silliness, the fair was fun. As Moses made clear:

The Fair is a funny business, if, indeed, it can be called a business at all. It is a strange combination of engineering and showmanship. It is part theater, part travelling carnival, part insubstantial pageant and part permanent park.¹⁸

A business that is not a business in a park that is not a park, engineered but not science, a show that is not quite a show, art that is not art—Moses managed to run through a laundry list of is/is-not constructions when trying to characterize the soul of the fair in summary in the Souvenir Book. The fair was fun because, within its serious framework, fairgoers were allowed the freedom to play, to construct their own meanings. The fake, the funny, the false, the exaggerated, the extraordinary, and the extreme provided meta-communicative paradoxes that allowed giant corporations and nation states to jostle for meaning with dolphin shows and robotic presidents. If, as Bateson suggests, the value of play lies in the ability and freedom of the player to construct meaning inside the paradoxically nested frames of context, the New York World's Fair of 1964/1965 was a city-sized effort of playful ambiguity. This fair was laced through and through with the pleasure of fun.

CONCLUSION

The 1964/1965 World's Fair was a fair clearly oriented around the Bateson concept of fun, a concept quite modern in its understanding of issues in a meta-communicative frame which allowed for both a literal and figurative play of ideas and interpretation. And if this fair was a fun fair, perhaps more so than the fairs that came before, can this account for some of its historical dismissal? Can it also account for the simultaneous retention of its importance and meaning in the minds of those who attended it? Orthodoxy demands certainty while play allows for a certain kind of individual freedom. It is the certainties we record as history, often dismissing individual, idiosyncratic experience along the way.

However, this thesis too easily dismisses the recognized value of fun at the fair. If fun was one of the key pleasures that brought people by the millions to the event—and indelibly marked the experience for many fairgoers—then it makes sense to expect an extension of that popular principle in future fairs. And, in fact, this is what happened. It was Disney,

however, rather than subsequent world's fairs that would inherit the bulk of the New York World's Fair legacy of fun.

Walt Disney's participation in the 1964/1965 World's Fair has long been noted as one of its more memorable features, with the Disney Company's four attractions at the fair being among the most popular. Disney-style entertainment and attractions remain one of its more memorable features years after the fair closed. By 1964, Disneyland was a growing success and in 1965 Walt Disney began to acquire the Florida land that would become Walt Disney World, a massive holding twice the size of the island of Manhattan. Many of the Disney-built attractions that had their debut at the fair were in fact prototypes that would later find permanent homes in one of Disney's parks. The influence of the fairs on Walt Disney's own design aesthetic eventually led to the Experimental Prototype Community of Tomorrow—a "permanent world's fair" realized at the EPCOT Center, a fair that is not a fair, built after Disney's death in 1982.¹⁹

The massive yet transient nature of each world's fair provides the events a kind of temporary permanence which fits within the magical frame of the is/is-not. While this temporary quality allowed the New York Fair to achieve global attention in its day, it may also have been its undoing. While the New York event proved that a fair should be fun, Disney pressed this idea to its natural conclusion by creating a permanent, albeit simulated, world's fair. Within the borders of Disney's fantastical land that is not a land, the tropes of world's fair-scale fun could be maintained, enhanced, and promoted. Any world's fair in the future would provide fun only in pale reflection of the glowing Magic Kingdom in Florida. After 1965, fun at the fair would find a new, dependable, and quite profitable home on the outskirts of Orlando, Florida.

¹⁹"\$1 Billion World's Fair, 50 Million Visitors Old, to End Quietly Today," *Los Angeles Times* 1965.

²Lawrence R. Samuel, *The end of the innocence : the 1964-1965 New York World's Fair*, 1st ed. (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 2007). xv.

³Robert W. Rydell, John E. Findling, and Kimberly D. Pelle, *Fair America : world's fairs in the United States* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2000).

⁴Samuel, *The end of the innocence : the 1964-1965 New York World's Fair*: xv.

⁵G. Bateson, *Steps to an Ecology of Mind* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972).

⁶*Ibid.*, 180.

⁷Johan Huizinga, *Homo ludens; a study of the play-element in culture* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1955).

⁸*Ibid.*, 14.

⁹Sutton-Smith 1997

¹⁰Samuel, *The end of the innocence : the 1964-1965 New York World's Fair*; Bill Cotter and Bill Young, *The 1964-1965 New York World's Fair : creation and legacy*, Images of America (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Pub., 2008).

¹¹New York World's Fair 1964-1965 Official Souvenir Book 1964

¹²Official Guide: New York World's Fair 1964, 170

¹³"New York World's Fair 1964-1965 Official Souvenir Book," (Time Life Books, 1964), 34.

¹⁴*ibid.*, 36.

¹⁵"New York World's Fair 1964-1965 Official Souvenir Book," 50.

¹⁶"New York World's Fair 1964-1965 Official Souvenir Book," 18.

¹⁷Rydell, Findling, and Pelle, *Fair America : world's fairs in the United States*: 1.

¹⁸"New York World's Fair 1964-1965 Official Souvenir Book," 19.

¹⁹S. Gennawey, *Walt and the Promise of Progress City* (Ayefour Publishing, 2011). 42.

IMAGE CREDITS

1-3. Scans by the author from original material.

7.4.

A History of Picnics at World's Fairs

Van Troi Tran

WHEN THE EXPO COMES TO LIFE

World's fairs, especially American world's fairs, have a rich tradition of fast food innovations: Cracker jacks were first massively produced for the Chicago World's Columbian Exposition in 1893, the first San Antonio Chili stand was at the same fair, ice cream cones and Fletcher Davis' hamburger were popularized at the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair, and other fairs featured less famous or successful culinary inventions. Closely connected to this tradition, but much less studied, are the open air picnics enjoyed by a significant proportion of the world's fair crowds who were too thrifty to invest in a restaurant meal, too busy to waste time waiting for service at restaurants or too social to miss the pleasure of a casual family meal. Whether enjoying bread, charcuterie and wine in Paris 1889, hot dogs and soft drinks in New York 1964 or KFC chicken nuggets in Shanghai 2010, picnickers were likely among the most visible, the noisiest (and maybe the smelliest) of all visitors, swarming under rest areas, occupying public banks, leaving traces, and making their marks all around the fairgrounds. However, despite their invading presence that colors and enlivens the monumental built landscape of world's fairs, picnickers are surprisingly absent from most of the textual or visual accounts of these events.

Since there is no accurate information on the daily number of picnickers who have occupied the sites of universal exhibitions, a historical investigation of picnics at world's fairs might appear to be a tricky endeavor bound to rely on an archipelago of fragmentary documents. Up until the great *fin-de-siècle* expositions of 1889, 1893 and 1900 that took a significant consumer-oriented turn with a proliferation of commercial concessions of all sorts, historical sources that attest to the existence of picnics are scarce. It certainly would not mean that open-air luncheons were not a frequent occurrence in the first world's fairs. Some paintings of the 1851 Crystal Palace do depict what appear to be outdoor repasts on the Hyde Park lawns, and the 1867 Universal Exhibition official report does confirm that "country people in particular, brought their food with them or were going by thousands to the model bakeries of Paris and Vienna. They stood outside on a bench for their meal, and borrowed their drinks from fountains of the Dhuys water, very popular with drinkers."¹ However, it would be no exaggeration to claim that the bulk of world's fair literature pays little attention to these very special moments at the time of lunch or dinner when the fairgrounds take on a whole new appearance under the massive occupation of visitors enjoying a casual outside meal.

As restaurants are colonized, terraces are packed, lawns and public benches are crammed with diners, the daily life of the exposition goes through a particular temporary phase as a multitude of mouths chew and drink in chorus. Paris 1889: “many groups unpack their victuals, spread them out on makeshift tables made of anything available, and absorb them with that great appetite that Parisians develop when they do a little exercise in the open air.”² Chicago 1893: “Fully 300,000 people ate their midday meal inside the grounds. One-third of this number went supplied with boxes and baskets containing sandwiches, pickles, pie, cake, and other articles of food generally contained in a well supplied picnic repast”, which means that: “Every bench and chair on the grounds, inside the Exposition buildings, about the plaza, and along the lake shore were occupied with lunch-eaters.”³ New York 1964/65: “At 1 o’clock yesterday afternoon Flushing Meadow resembled a huge picnic area. World’s Fair visitors by the tens of thousands ate their lunch out of picnic baskets or paper bags,”⁴ and “With temperatures in the high 60’s, not a cloud in the sky and the fair now ablaze with autumn colors, most of the day’s visitors simply turned Flushing Meadow into an enormous picnic ground.”⁵ Montreal 1967: “Many fair-goers took sandwiches and ate at picnic spots provided by Expo and others made do with light snacks at hotdog and hamburger stands.”⁶ In other words, at mealtime users exploited other places, the site is experienced differently, bodies rest for a moment, conversations between friends and family members take a more casual turn as the endless pedestrian explorations are put on pause. World’s fairs turn out to be lively geographies, “spaces that flirt and flout, gyre and gimble, twist and shout,”⁷ and eventually spaces that show wear and tear. However, the massive human sea that triggers this vibrant state of affairs is precisely what makes these mega-events peculiar settings for an activity traditionally associated with week-end excursions in the middle of greeneries, pastures and quiet landscapes. The curious practice of picnicking at world’s fairs, where the joyfulness of discovering the world may quickly turn into the hurriedness to see everything, thus raises a series of interesting anthropological questions that attend to the material, social and sensual dimension of the international exhibition.

OPEN AIR SOCIETIES

One point of entry could be the classical sociological problematic of social distinction, and how the picnic in some ways reverses it. According to the journalist Vital Meurysse who made regular contributions on the public at the 1889 Universal Exhibition: “The millionaires have the restaurants in the Eiffel Tower, where lobster prices reached heights greater than the monument itself and where the apple chateaubriand is worth its weight in banknotes. Smaller wallets fall back on the bouillons Duval, at the door of which a scrawny waiting line recalls some of the most memorable days of the siege. The common people dine outdoors, and they are right.”⁸ Aristocrats lodged in the sky, bourgeois in the dining rooms, and workers on the ground, but eventually it seems like the latter were not only the wisest but also those who were enjoying the event the most. Paul Varelli’s drawing “Les ventres à l’Exposition [Bellies at the Exposition]” (Fig. 1) which featured different caricatures of dining situations at the 1900 Paris Universal Exhibition provided a graphic illustration of this social distribution of pleasure. Wealthy couples were “those who pay the most and

have the least fun” (middle right), and restaurant patrons displayed a long face in front of their disappointing meal (center), while conversely countrymen eating on a public bench (top left) were “always practical”, and the poor who “don’t care about the crowd” chose to willfully sacrifice their seating comfort for minutes of peace (top right).



Figure 1. A typology of picnickers at the 1900 Universal Exhibition.

Sociologist Claude Grignon argues that as a popular practice, the picnic “is prone to a populist celebration” of a “weakened mythology designed to make it a poetic and fabulous object.” This journey to the Land of the People amounted to a rediscovery of some virtues presented as intrinsically popular, for better or for worse depending on the commentator’s leanings. In opposition to the uptight masquerades, the stiff conventions and the ceremonial glitz of bourgeois society, the *fin-de-siècle* picnic symbolized the people’s practical sense and its appreciation of down-to-earth pleasures.

World’s fairs, just like any event of international magnitude, generate a recurrent problem of crowdedness and inflated catering prices. Picnics are thus predictably depicted as the activity of pennywise visitors who decide to carry their own lunch on the site in order to avoid the either too crammed or too costly restaurants. Instances of this portrayal of picnickers as thrifty consumers can be found already during the Philadelphia’s Centennial Exposition in 1876 as a reporter of the *Atlantic Monthly* expressed his admiration for foreign visitors who appeared to have mastered the delicate art of eating out both well and frugally:

About the homeliest visitors were the Germans of the lower classes, who came on pleasure bent, frugally provided with luncheon; they installed themselves at their national restaurant, called for a glass of beer, which cost them five cents, unwrapped a newspaper parcel, and ate its contents. This economy is respectable; perhaps their example and the pinch of the times may teach us the lesson which every German, Frenchman, and Italian knows – the difference between thrift and parsimony, saving a penny not for itself but for what it will bring. We have too long trifled in habits of extravagance and waste, our sole idea of economy being a stern self-denial which cuts off luxury and enjoyment alike and reduces life to a grim pleasureless level.¹⁰

This representation of the picnic as a pleasurable and money-saving eating option at the fair carried on through the twentieth Century, which can be seen in the practical advice columns published during the events. Moving one century forward, a typical tip taken from the *Kiplinger's* magazine in 1965 during the New York fair reads: "The most crowded time is noon and afternoon. That's when to sit around on a park bench, have a picnic lunch or spend time at exhibits that don't draw crowds."¹¹ Robert Alden's methodical guide to the 1967 Montreal Expo suggests accordingly that: "Because of the frequent expense and long waits, more and more people are bringing their picnic snacks."¹² Also, as automotive tourism developed in America during the 1960's, many continental road trips were organized to the New York and Montreal world's fairs. Bostonians heading to Montreal were thus told that they could: "save a considerable amount of money by camping, or by planning picnic meals"¹³.



LE VRAI PEUPLE.....

Figure 2. The "real people" eating on a public bench, 1900 Universal Exhibition.

PEACEFUL PLEASURES

The light gaiety of the diners on the go is another dominant feature in the many drawings, caricatures and descriptions of Sunday outdoor feasts at the Paris Universal Exhibition of 1889 and 1900 that were featured in the illustrated and humoristic magazines of the time. But interestingly, while not necessarily neglecting the food component per se, the picnicker's pleasure often appeared to be rather linked to the sociability involved in picnics, the soothing virtues of the experience, and the spontaneous nature of the activity which could be interpreted as an expression of popular vitality or authentic simplicity. For Georges Hamon, author of a series of photographs of the public at the Exhibition of 1900 for *Le Mois littéraire*, it is literally the "real people" (*le vrai peuple*) awkwardly dining on park benches (Fig. 2): "the merry bunch that came for fun without any embarrassment."

In his commentary on the engraving of Luis Jimenez on the "open air restaurants on Sundays at the 1889 Exhibition", the journalist from *La Española y Americana Ilustración* who was visiting Paris for the Exhibition stated that with the increase of thermal influx during Sundays caused by the mass of visitors packed in a confined space, the fresh grass lawns became a very popular place.¹⁵



Figure 3. "Open-air restaurants" on a week-end at the 1889 Universal Exhibition.

As Maurice Bloch, and many others, remind us, "the action of eating together, is [...] one of the most powerful operators of social process."¹⁶ Since the assault on the senses produced by the world's fair crowds and exhibits may tend to accentuate feelings of bewilderment and exhaustion for some visitors, the picnic turns out to be a salutary occasion not only to restore the energies of bodies and minds, but also for the retrieval of a humanizing setting of close sociability in the midst of the mega-event's turbulent bustle. After spending a whole day of strolling around the pavilions and gazing at the spectacular marvels of progress and technology, the small groups of visitors portrayed by Luis Jimenez were delightfully sitting back and sharing the serene moment of a communal meal in a quiet area a few steps away from the busy alleys. In the introduction of his advice column in the *Boston Globe*, Herbert Black makes the following recommendation to Expo 67 visitors: "Because the senses can be satiated with all the sights and sounds of the exhibits, it is wise to plan a leisurely lunch each day, either at one of the many restaurants or from a picnic basket."¹⁷ After all, in spite of all the feelings of joy and excitement that radiate from the festivities, the experience of visiting a world's fair of great proportions can often veer on the daunting. Lawns, trees, gardens, and sometimes bodies of water thus attracted picnickers eager to take a break from the fair's sensorial maelstrom: from the banks of the Seine to the new promenade on the lake front at Jackson Park which was supposedly the "favorite picnic-ground"¹⁸ during the 1893 Exposition, to the abounding "Picnic spots [...] found on the grassy banks of the St. Lawrence river, on the slopes of artificial canals or lagoons, and in the woods of the city park on St. Helen's island back of the American pavilion, which ha[d] grills for cook-outs."¹⁹

At the Shanghai World Expo, it was the covered zone under the elevated walkways that sheltered the mass of picnickers from both the punishing sun of July and the thunderous rain falls of October (Fig. 4).



Figure 4. Lunchtime on a rainy day at the Shanghai World Expo, 2010.

THE PICNICKER'S GEAR

The trademark Shanghai umbrellas protecting their owners from sun and rain also point to the crucial issue of the equipment of visitors who plan to have an outdoor meal on the Expo site. If the picnic depends by definition on “a triad of mobile bodies, food, and utensils,”²⁰ the objects that fail at being mobile enough quickly turn into a burden for the fatigued visitor. This is particularly evident in this evocative description of a family visiting the Paris Exposition Universelle in 1889:

By ten o'clock the whole family is at the counters, the homemaker's big basket intended for the purchase of supplies market is filled. The sides contain large cold meat and other traditional supplements. Bread and liquids are bought at food kiosks. However, some visitors, in a spirit of distrust, are not afraid to carry this supplementary weight. The cart does not leave its weight to rest, as each member carries it in turn. The unfortunate who's caught with the chore is left at the entrance of the attractions, while the group leaves in reconnaissance. If the show is worth it, they relay the wearer. At lunchtime, finally, they are relieved from the infamous basket²¹.

This amusing account of what appeared to be the week-end journey of a typical thrifty working-class or provincial French family at the great Paris Exposition directs the reader's attention to the importance of a well organized visit for tourists passing through the fair. Hence the mass of publications about “practical” or “methodic” visiting tips and advices,

and other “\$5 a day” meal suggestions²² that sprung up in daily newspapers and tourist guides during any international exhibition. “We didn’t come to the fair to spend our time eating,” was apparently an often-heard statement in New York at the 1964/65 fair.²³ But it is also interesting to pay attention to the design and marketing of new products that were conceived to meet the world’s fair picnickers’ demand for comfort and convenience. What is time management but body management with the appropriate paraphernalia? In 1939, gadgets for the picnickers “designed to make a picnic as comfort-lined as a luncheon at home in the dining room” were part of the new commodities available to New Yorkers in city shops, such as compact hampers “that look exactly like a suitcase” and contained “Five very sturdy and useful pieces of picnic cutlery come in a tan canvas roll” which “Until they are pulled out for use they not very likely to cut children’s fingers groping in the sandwich before the picnic has officially begun.”²⁴ In 1964, special gift baskets for fairgoers were advertised: “The fairgoer’s gift starts out with a Philippine woven bag and holds thoughtful items like foot balm, sunglasses, a rain hat, sandwich bags, and napkins and suggestion for a picnic lunch to take to the fair.”²⁵ The “Food Fashions Family Furnishings” section of the *New York Times*, also featured an advertisement for Tote bags as a woman’s “necessity”, especially for the New York World’s Fair, since: “A trip to the World’s Fair adds even more paraphernalia, including, perhaps, a picnic lunch.”²⁶ At the 1967 Montreal Expo, the trend seemed instead: “Flight bags with a strap slung over a shoulder, usually a mother’s, are common sights in the crowds. They carry sandwiches, cold drinks, or other requirements for quick snacks.”²⁷ And last but not least, we also have to mention the trendy multicolored folding stools, “the latest hot-ticket item at the Expo 2010 Shanghai.”²⁸

Of course, meeting the demand of picnickers also meant adapting the format of dishes to the fast pace of the event. The concept of take-away lunch baskets was already present in 1893: “It was the popular lunch basket that helped out the restaurants and lunch counters. Otherwise it would have been impossible for all people to eat.”²⁹ In Montreal a 95 cents picnic box was available at the Ontario pavilion: “The box lunch includes choice of hot dog, hamburger, or meat pie served with coleslaw, potato chips, soft drink, and ice cream, or the ethnic dish of the day (cabbage roll creole, mixed sea food with cheese sauce) a different one each day for 21 days.”³⁰

USES AND ABUSES

The predictable negative outcome of the proliferation of picnics on the fair grounds has obviously always been the production of a great amount of litter. Picnickers take control of public spaces, occupy public benches, lawns and flower beds, and their meals leave all kinds of traces and litter on the site. In a way, picnics embody the freedom of consumers who are taking over the fairgrounds and imply a form of spatial insubordination, or at least creative appropriation of the site’s equipment. Thus, during the Paris Universal Exhibitions, many caricatures of the visitors pay a special attention to this insubordinate character of the Parisian people, its lively spontaneity and its authentic simplicity. In a series of drawings of sights taken on a Sunday of 1889, the cartoonist Henriot portrays some of these popular

habits of the crowd of picnickers occupying inconvenient spots, such as Greek statues or pedestals, and replying mockingly to a confused policeman while lying on the grass, legs over the garden hoops, and drinking two bottles of wine (Fig. 5). Statues were also likewise occupied during the 1893 Chicago's Centennial Exposition on the occasion of the poor children's day at the fair: "Some juvenile diners selected peculiar perches on which to rest and eat their dinners. They climbed over the lions and figures of the animals at the entrances to several of the buildings and amused themselves throwing crusts at the passerby."³¹



Figure 5. Picnickers using the site. 1889 Universal Exhibition.

However, for some French critics of good taste at the end of the Nineteenth century, those popular repasts that were taking over the public space were too garish and obnoxious in times of official celebrations as the French nation was welcoming the world in its capital. The famous chef Auguste Escoffier, who at the same time played a pivotal role in the emergence of culinary exhibitions showcasing the craftsmanship of French chefs advocating their professionalization,³² expressed his aversion for the presence of these meals on the go exposed to the gaze of the international community:

Every day the Exposition alleys are converted into refectories, the lawns are turned into dining rooms, and the management is paying dearly for not having foreseen that.

The Exposition has undoubtedly gained in quaintness and we are not of those who look down on this amusing and philosophical spectacle of the crowd in want of salami and cheap wine. But we also think that the pleasure of eating has nothing to do with such kind of feasts. An Exposition in Paris, Capital of Taste and Queen of Cuisine, shall spare us from these scenes that suggest a people of lazzaroni, not a gourmet nation.

"Meals on the go" are tolerable at the Bois de Boulogne or the Bois de Clamart, not at the Exposition. This spectacle seems all the more distressing

as we tend to see in it the manifestation of a kind of public mistrust towards restaurants. This distrust is even more absurd insofar as we believe it to be caused by a miscalculation. The visitor's picnic basket eventually costs him just as much (if not more) than a meal at an average restaurant. Furthermore, the unfortunate visitor eats badly kept food that is carried all day in papers among melted cheese, mashed meals and overheated wine, all of this while poorly seated and stiff.³³

The apparently innocent and frivolous activity of picnicking at the fair was caught in larger disputes around issues of national identity and the symbolic weight of food in the definition of French culture. Escoffier's rant in defense of the exceptionality of French culinary craft can thus be contextualized in the emergence of a metropolitan mass culture at the turn of the 20th Century. With the development of leisure and mass consumption in the second half of the 19th Century, the Parisian picnic was indeed becoming a tradition and a cultural marker of French identity, with its archetypal combination of *baguette*, red wine, cheese and salami. This culinary concern was remarkably totally absent from the descriptions of picnics at the American world's fairs of the same era. For American authors, the picnic had very different connotations, closer to pastoral ideals and evocations of childhood innocence: "In fact, the fair seemed to be very much like a prolonged Sunday school picnic, which was, of course, patronized mostly by the best class of people."³⁴ In Chicago, what most impressed a reader of the *Critic* was "the decorum of that immense crowd," as "The people were as staid and quiet as at a Sunday-school picnic; not one drunken, or noisy, or unruly person did I see during my six days and two nights at Jackson Park."³⁵ At the St. Louis World's Fair of 1904, it was said that:

For the Fourth of July all the wooded section of the world's fair enclosure has been reserved as a picnic ground and the exposition management has extended an invitation to those who would enjoy an old fashioned Fourth to spread their basket dinners under the beautiful forest trees, where there is plenty of shade and an abundance of pure and wholesome water [...] This will enable families and parties to enjoy a day's outing, see the world's fair and take part in the greatest patriotic celebration ever held in the country's history. The picnic feature gives to the event a homelike touch that is intended to make the day enjoyable for all who attend.³⁶

All these accounts of outdoor repasts at world's fairs tend to show how picnics have been since the nineteenth century an important component in the history of world's fairs both from the perspective of the fairgoers' experience and the organizers' concerns. Making sense of picnics is always problematic to a certain extent insofar this practice throws the observer into the most contingent and lively situations of world's fairs but also connects with wider-ranging concerns from national identity in the 19th Century to security concerns nowadays. At the Shanghai Expo 2010, in times of bioterrorist threats and food safety scandals, the introduction and circulation of edibles on the Expo site posed new problems and challenges for an administration eager to demonstrate its efficiency to the international public eye. Thanks to airport-style X-ray belts and security checks at the Expo gates, liquids

and food were tightly controlled in order to prevent any occurrence of food poisoning that would remotely evoke the milk scandal that hit the Beijing Olympic Games. According to the authorities: “Cooked food, cakes and boxed meals are not allowed into the site because of their propensity to easily turn bad in hot weather”, whereas “Dry food such as breads, biscuits and unpeeled fruit and vegetables, like cucumber, are suggested.³⁷” And in the hot sweltering days of August, electric signs were indicating in typical Chinglish:

Dear visitors, welcome to Expo 2010 Shanghai China! Summer has arrived and please pay attention to food safety at Expo site. No perishable food. No overabundant food. No take away food. Pay attention to the quality of food you buy at Expo site, and cook food should be eaten as soon as possible. Wish you a pleasant tour!

¹*Rapport sur l'Exposition universelle de 1867 à Paris. Précis des opérations et listes des collaborateurs. Avec un appendice sur l'avenir des expositions, la statistique des opérations, les documents officiels et le plan de l'Exposition* (Paris: Imprimerie impériale, 1869), 164.

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7.5.

Epcot: Disney's (Sort of) World's Fair

Stacy Warren

As anyone investigating world's fairs will soon discover, it does not take long before one runs across the name of Walt Disney. Walt himself contributed directly to several fairs between 1939 and 1964. Two of the attractions he designed for the 1964 New York fair, "It's a Small World" and "Carousel of Progress," are still operating at Disney theme parks. But Disney's most lasting contribution to the phenomenon of world's fairs is, ironically, not a world's fair at all. Rather, it is Epcot (formerly Epcot Center), a permanent theme park located at the Walt Disney World theme park in Orlando, Florida.

EPCOT REALIZED: MORE THAN JUST AN AFTERTHOUGHT

When Epcot Center opened to the public on Oct. 1, 1982 at Walt Disney World, it carried the heavy burden of being clearly *not* what Walt Disney himself had intended. In his original plans for what was referred to as "EPCOT"—Experimental Prototypical Community of Tomorrow—Walt Disney envisioned not merely a new paid attraction at his theme park but a fully working city of the future with 20,000 residents. Since then, much attention has been given to the architectural and urban planning aspects of his unrealized design (see, for example, exhaustive studies by Foglesong 2001, Mannheim 2002, and Gabler 2006), while the theme park Epcot that did open sixteen years later is often dismissed as a pale imitation unworthy of serious consideration—a place that, to quote Matthew C. Arnold, "more closely resembled a permanent World's Fair than Walt's technology-driven utopia."¹

To any serious student of the world's fair, this is an accusation far too intriguing to ignore. World's fairs have played a long and significant role in the emergence of industrial (and now post-industrial) urban space and culture. They have been associated with the hegemonic naturalization of technology, commodification, and empire for western audiences. In the fair's splendid pavilions, technology was presented as an unequivocally positive, democratizing force, and "displays of material and natural abundance became an outward sign of inward 'racial fitness'."² Further, even if the fair itself was an ephemeral dream world of lathe and plaster, its legacy lived on through the influence of architectural styles and urban planning approaches. Since the Disney Company has been equally heralded and vilified as one of the most powerful recent influences on North American culture and urban space, the question of what Disney would do with a "permanent world's fair" is indeed compelling.

Visitors to Epcot find a landscape reminiscent of a world's fair. The 300 acre park is divided into two general themed areas, Future World and World Showcase. Both bear a strong resemblance to the familiar tropes of exposition design, with Future World highlighting corporate-sponsored technologies, and World Showcase presenting eleven different international pavilions. A world's fair is already in itself a landscape laden with consciously crafted symbolic messages. Disney Imagineers are known for perfecting the art of symbolic design in theme parks and beyond. They are notorious for programming in the positive, and skillfully leaving out the negative. What happens when they set their sights on "improving" the world's fair? Further, what happens when this impetus is carried out in an environment privately owned by a single entity with a reputation for nearly fanatical degrees of control, yet just as dependent on external funding as a traditional fair? It is evident that Epcot is a complex environment with its own legitimate history that both borrows from and redefines traditional fair conditions, and that deserves the attention of fair observers and theme park aficionados alike.

WHAT WALT LEARNED: WALT DISNEY'S INVOLVEMENT IN WORLD'S FAIRS

Beginning with the debut of a four-minute Mickey Mouse cartoon in 1939 for the Nabisco Pavilions at the Golden Gate International Exposition and New York World's Fair. Walt Disney had extensive experience with world's fairs. He designed the "America the Beautiful" Circarama attraction for the United States Pavilion at the 1958 Brussels World's Fair, which was also utilized at the 1959 Moscow Fair.³ In the 1962 Century 21 Exposition in Seattle, fair planners sought out the Disney Company for its skills in behind-the-scenes organizational management, crowd control, and event design. However, Disney's most significant contributions would be to the New York 1964 World's Fair. Disney himself was heavily involved in the design of several attractions and in protracted and often intense negotiations with corporate sponsors. Robert Rydell has argued that before the 1933 Chicago World's Fair, corporations were secondary to nationalistic interests; since that time the world's fair has increasingly become a platform for corporate sponsors to "sell the future."⁴ Walt Disney's experiences at the 1964 Fair provide a glimpse of the importance of the relationship between Disney, corporate sponsorship, and consumerism, as well as the strained conflicts between them. Biographer Neal Gabler tracks negotiations with no fewer than thirteen different corporate sponsors at various points, and documents several hair-raisingly tense moments as Disney finalized his involvement with eventual sponsors General Electric (Carousel of Progress), Ford (Magic Skyway), Pepsi-Cola (It's a Small World), and the lone non-corporate partner, the state of Illinois (Mr. Lincoln). The Disney Company's advances with their new Audio-Animatronic technologies are well documented; less discussed, however, is its equally innovative experimentation with methods whereby familiar American corporations could offer the world a comforting reinforcement of American consumer culture. Each Disney attraction began with a kernel of commodity and wove a distinctly (and almost exclusively) Disney narrative around it. As Jonathan Lillie argues, the Disney/corporate relationship often worked so well at the world's fair because all parties firmly believed in the same "technotopic future."⁵ GE, Ford, Pepsi-Cola, and the

legislature of Illinois soon learned that if they could provide the money to Disney, they could trust the company to articulate their vision, especially if they kept criticism and skepticism regarding Disney's design visions to themselves.⁶

EPCOT AS THE DISNEY VERSION OF THE WORLD'S FAIR

Many observers dismiss Epcot as it stands at Walt Disney World as a weak Disney management compromise that bears little of Walt's original vision.⁷ On the surface, their disappointment is justifiable. No one would mistake the current theme park for the functioning utopian city Walt promised to a 1965 television audience and subsequently immortalized in a now-classic 24-minute film recorded one month before his death. At the same time, such a perspective obscures what might be Disney's most lasting legacy in any theme park landscape: a blueprint for negotiating, packaging, and controlling space. The lessons Walt learned in New York live on in Epcot.

The formation of the Epcot that millions of people visit each year—and the public narratives that told and then retold that story—reveal the influence of several world's fair-like impulses. During the transition years following Disney's death, the company publically distanced itself from Walt's utopian designs but still repeatedly used the rhetoric of technological optimism laced with cultural superiority. In 1975, years before ground was broken or conceptual plans were anywhere near completion, then-Disney President Card Walker announced with bold assurance that “our country needs a national focal point—a forum—where we can expose the possible solutions that will enable our leaders to more adequately and economically deal with our nation's future growth.”⁸ Michael Crawford's careful reconstruction of events leading to Epcot's opening reinforces the degree to which its planning, as well as its rhetoric, also resembled that of a world's fair.⁹ From the initial ideological visions—also very much of innovation and empire—planted by Walt before his death, to their translation into architectural “satellites” meant to showcase cutting-edge research and development, to their eventual crystallization into two spatial groupings (one dedicated to the future, one to the international), and even to the creation of an Epcot Institute with expert advisory boards, the working history of Epcot sounds a lot like the working history of any mid-to-late twentieth-century world's fair.

FUTURE WORLD

As with any modern world's fair, the key to success would be the ability to attract the right balance of corporate sponsors and national governments. By 1975, according to Walker, Disney was deep in conversation with the National Science Foundation, the Jet Propulsion Lab, “various utility companies [...] and various oil and gas companies.”¹⁰ Its role at that point was apparently more advisory, with topics focusing on nuclear and solar energy sources. When conventional corporations such as Exxon, General Electric, and Bell Systems became involved as sponsors, concrete exhibit ideas for Future World began to materialize. The iconic Spaceship Earth (Fig. 2), the shiny geodesic sphere that greets visitors as they enter Epcot, was one of the first exhibits to be announced. Originally envisioned somewhat

Epcot



0 0.25 Miles

Map designed by S. Warren



Figure 1. Epcot world showcase map.

vaguely as a show about Buckminster Fuller's idea of "man and his spaceship earth," it mutated into an Audio-Animatronic tour of key breakthroughs in communication throughout history, once the Bell sponsorship was finalized. Eventually, six other corporate pavilions joined Spaceship Earth to form the area of the park known as Future World: The Land (Kraft), The Living Seas (weapons contractors United Technologies), Universe of Energy (Exxon), Horizons (General Electric), World of Motion (General Motors), and Journey into the Imagination (Kodak). The multi-sponsored Communicore buildings (east and west) wrapped around Spaceship Earth and formed a central hub for park guests.

Most of the first generation Future World attractions were designed, paradoxically, as "sweeping renditions of the past"—entertaining dark rides through scenes depicting various stages of human technological development over land and resources that served as "stylized fables of progress."¹¹ It was understood that participating sponsors would give "near total-control of quality and conceptual presentation" to Disney.¹² Sponsors provided general themes, and Disney Imagineers wove them into familiar Disney-like narratives. In most rides, visitors drifted past humorous scenes from the past to reach the culmination where today's corporate technologies led to a brighter tomorrow. The main exception was Communicore, where a variety of individually sponsored exhibits invited visitors to interact with the cutting-edge technologies of 1982, such as AT&T's giant touch-screen map or Sperry/UNISYS's voice-activated robot. Roland Marchand and Michael Smith draw attention to the ways that Future World exaggerated a trend already visible in world's fairs.¹³ "At the New York fairs," they comment, "science and technology became compressed into appliances." At Epcot those appliances were playfully but profoundly linked to visitor's everyday lives through the immersive Audio-Animatronic landscapes designed by the Imagineers, and thus "Future World visitors could see themselves inhabiting global corporate visions." The corporate vision, however, was distinctly the Disney version: Time, Inc. reportedly withdrew sponsorship entirely from Future World in protest of the direction Imagineers were taking their pavilion.¹⁴

WORLD SHOWCASE

The other half of Epcot, World Showcase, relied on Disney's ability to attract "governments and consortiums of leading companies representing their nations," in Card Walker's words, which is to say, international financing. Disney's 1975 Annual Report to shareholders described two semi-circular modernist structures, each to hold multiple national pavilions where visitors could enjoy themed restaurants, shops, industrial displays, cultural presentations, and a "Disney-designed ride or attraction which will give guests a foretaste of an actual visit to the country." They further stipulated in their report that participating nations would be responsible for the costs of design and construction of their pavilion, for employee housing, and for a ten-year land lease that would cover the cost of attraction maintenance. The assumption was that if national governments had in the past willingly spent money to create a presence at a temporary world's fair, they would be doubly eager to install themselves permanently in the Disney version.

Disney executives soon discovered they had overestimated their own appeal. Reportedly, the first 31 countries they approached declined, though a few later reconsidered.¹⁷ The steep price tag was typically blamed. When Epcot finally opened, nine countries were represented in World Showcase; two more would be added over the next six years. In a significant design departure, each national pavilion was built as a stand-alone themed building designed by Disney Imagineers. Only one pavilion, that for Mexico, featured a “Disney-designed ride.” The other planned rides never materialized, nor did the flush of financing that Disney had expected. Not a single one of the original nine countries provided all of its own funding; instead, national pavilions were financed through a variety of foreign sponsorship deals and a considerable infusion of Disney’s own money.¹⁸ The Moroccan Pavilion, added in 1984, would be the first (and only) pavilion to be paid for entirely by its hosting government; in 1988 Norway would fund a significant portion of its pavilion and contribute Epcot’s second dark ride attraction.

In the national pavilions, Imagineers employed iconographic architectural elements—the Eiffel Tower in France, a pagoda in Japan, a pyramid in Mexico—and host countries supplied themed merchandise, food, and cultural displays. All employees were natives of their pavilion’s country. The effect, in Stephen Fjellman’s words, was “appropriate:” the visitor “hears appropriate themed music, sees appropriate street people, eats appropriate food.”¹⁹ The legacy of technology and empire from world’s fairs past, of course, has gradually helped shaped what we define, culturally, as “appropriate.”

A PERMANENT WORLD’S FAIR IN THE REAL WORLD

Unlike a real world’s fair, Epcot is not ephemeral. It does not go away in six months or two years. Problems that may never have arisen at a world’s fair, such as deteriorating corporate partnerships, technological obsolescence, jaded audiences, or simply the passage of time shape Epcot’s everyday landscape as strongly as any of Disney’s long range plans. Understandably, exhibits that feature modern technologies are the most vulnerable to replacement. Communicore, for example, lasted twelve years before experiencing a major overhaul: what one blog contributor called its well-organized “electronic tranquility” was replaced by louder, flashier exhibits aimed at the video game generation offered by a new set of sponsors.²⁰ A closer examination of Epcot history indicates that functionality alone rarely motivates change by itself; instead, what guests see on the ground on any given day is often end result of a combination of unanticipated economic, political, practical, and cultural factors.

Financial relationships with both corporations and countries have been an ongoing source of instability. Jason Garcia reports that deals are typically multi-year and large enough to create problems during times of economic hardship—GM for example paid “as much as \$35 million” in 1978 for its first ten years; more recently both GM and Siemens AG paid \$100 million for ten- and twelve-year contracts.²¹ When contracts are up for renegotiation, long-standing exhibits are left in limbo and may be abandoned if contracts are not renewed. General Electric (Horizons), Exxon (Universe of Energy), Kraft (The Land) and

AT&T (Spaceship Earth) all walked away from contracts and, in consequence, their flagship attractions. Some pavilions disappeared entirely, as was the fate of Horizons and Wonders of Life. In other cases, new pavilions have replaced the departed corporate commodities with Disney characters, such as The Living Seas utilization of fish from the Disney computer-animated film *Finding Nemo*. If new sponsors are found, a pavilion may experience an abrupt re-write. Spaceship Earth, for instance, was hastily redesigned to better reflect new sponsor Siemens AG's technology portfolio after original sponsor AT&T left.²²

National pavilions, likewise, can face similar challenges. The saga of continued struggles faced by Norway neatly encapsulates the scope of these experiences. A relative latecomer to Epcot, Norway's arrival in 1988 was the public culmination of years of behind-the-scenes negotiations and dead ends.²³ Initial talks were held with Denmark, not Norway, but potential corporate sponsor LEGO—which had created its own branded theme park in Denmark in 1968—reportedly wanted “too much control.” After a failed attempt to create a consortium between Denmark, Sweden, and Norway.²⁴ Norway emerged as the sole financier. Eager to boost tourism, Norway secured a short-lived combination of government and private money. Private sponsors divested their interests in 1992, and the government pulled out in 2002. Since then, the pavilion has been sponsor-less and is by all accounts decaying, with the showpiece film an outdated embarrassment.²⁵ Rather than ignore the situation, Norwegian filmmakers produced a replacement film at their own expense and sent it to Disney. Disney refused to incorporate it into the pavilion, saying it was below their quality standards. They insisted that Norway was solely responsible for paying for any improvements to the pavilion, but was not qualified to participate in their conceptual design. The controversy received much attention in the Norwegian press, and eventually a request for the government to resume funding for the pavilion was brought before Parliament. The government responded with a call for renewed private support.²⁶ Basically at an impasse, the only modification to the Norway pavilion in recent years was the addition of a scavenger hunt activity based on the distinctly non-Norwegian Disney character Kim Possible.

To paraphrase Griel Marcus' insightful observation (originally in reference to Disneyland), there is a way in which world's fairs called Epcot into being, and a way in which Epcot reflects back the light of its own place.²⁷ It might be said that in designing and maintaining Epcot, Disney Imagineers are holding a mirror to a mirror. They are constructing a message that was itself constructed and reconstructed according to the twin pillars of the world's fair: technology and empire. Sometimes at Epcot the results are reflected faithfully back to us, yet at other times they come back as something unrecognizable and unexpectedly new. Epcot is a living forum: in the presence of an ever-changing audience and over the course of time, those messages can be absorbed, rewritten, and rejected. In Epcot, we have the chance to ask the one question an actual world's fair could never answer: how do narratives of technology and empire change when permanently embedded in the landscape?

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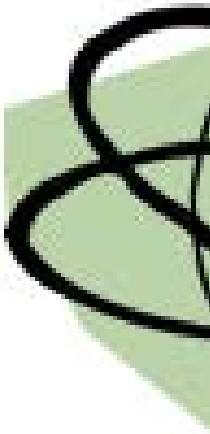
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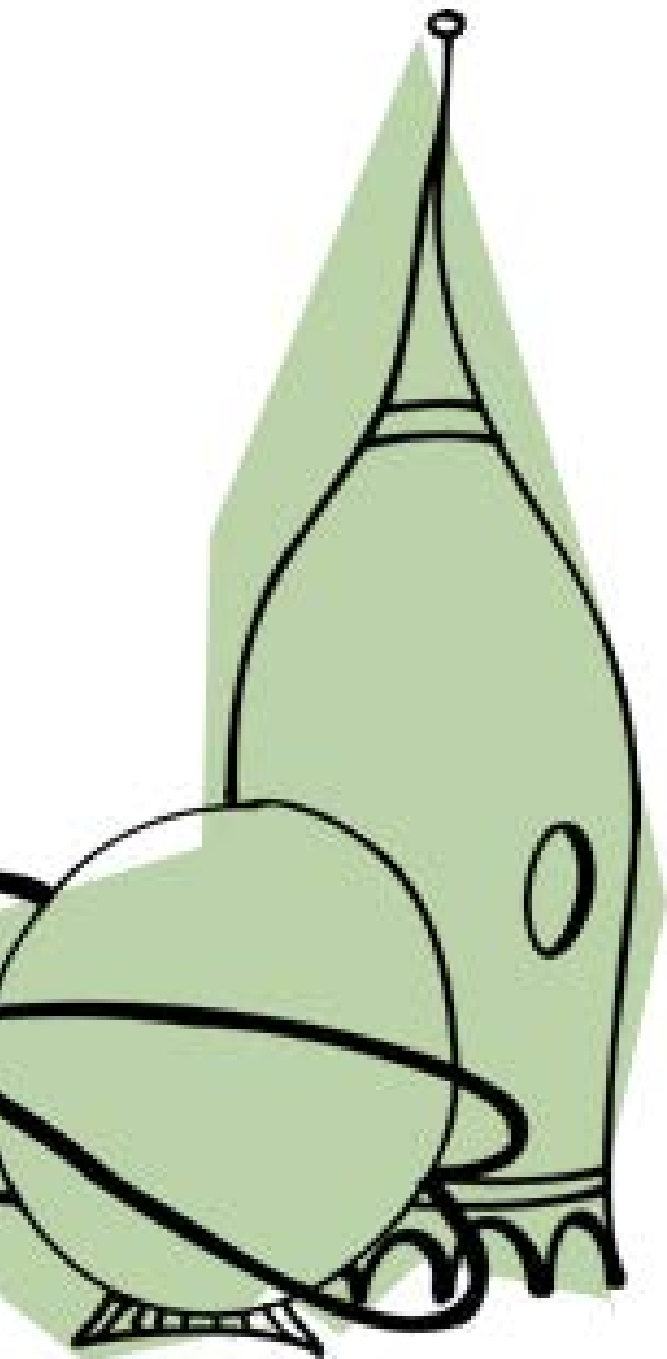
IMAGE CREDITS

1. Map designed by Stacy Warren.



PAVILION OF THE FUTURE

SECTION 8



8.1.

Cartoons of Tomorrow's Conveniences

Bobby Schweizer

[The fair] should stress the vastly increased opportunity and the developed mechanical means which this twentieth century has brought to the masses for better living and accompanying human happiness [...] supercivilization is based on the swift work of machines, not on the arduous toil of men.”¹

—The 1939 New York World's Fair Planning Committee

The decade of the 1930s saw an increased belief in the public imagination that scientific and technological progress could benefit society and alleviate the drudgery of domestic life through consumer products.² Not limited to a science-fiction future, popular media in a variety of forms—radio, film, novel, magazine, advertising—depicted a better tomorrow achievable through technology in the early twentieth century. The medium of animation was no exception. With its ability to bring the impossible to life, animation was able to contemplate the impact of individual and domestic technologies of the imagined near-future. Three cartoon depictions of the technologies of modern convenience illustrate how a culture of consumer-driven forward-thinking exhibition emerged from the world's fair. The first, *Modern Inventions* (1937) is a Disney short featuring Donald Duck. The next, Fleischer Studios' *All's Fair at the Fair* (1938), was produced about the 1939 New York World's Fair for a Paramount newsreel. Finally, *Dog Gone Modern* (1939) helped close the decade with Warner Bros. turning its attention to the technological house of modern conveniences. Though two of these cartoons were not made about specific fairs, their inspiration is clearly drawn from the world's fair zeitgeist. Each took advantage of animation as a medium that allowed for imaginative freedom. Not only could they transcend the possibilities of real world construction, they also were not limited to the special effects achievable in live-action cinema. As such, they were able to bring non-existent technologies to life. Although they have similarities in terms of technologies depicted—automated processes, robots, items of domestic luxury—their representations as cartoons adopt unique styles while addressing similar thematic concerns.

Though produced during the Great Depression, these cartoons depicted a trend in American media in which “many sectors of American business adopted the future as an explicit leitmotif in advertising and other promotions.”³ Whether architecture, urban design, transportation, industry, or consumer goods, the 1930s saw a cultural force promising

modern technologies as a remedy for a stagnant consumer society. This belief was evident at the 1933 Century of Progress exhibition and the 1939-1940 New York World's Fair.

In 1926, the mayor of Chicago called together a meeting to create a planning body for an international exposition celebrating the centennial of the founding of Chicago. A Century of Progress, as the exposition would be known, focused on modern architecture, science, art, and industry. The Chicago fair was notable because its planning and inception straddled the stock market crash of 1929 and America's plunge into the Great Depression. However, by the opening of the fair in 1933, the economic situation of the United States "made the positive, upbeat theme of scientific progress even more popular among visitors."⁴ The 1939 New York World's Fair was also pitched as an event to help drive the commercial economy.⁵ In 1935 the planning committee decided on the "Fair of the Future" for the exposition's theme, stressing the application of technological advances in modern life. This mentality can be seen in each of the three cartoons chosen for analysis which all make reference to the kinds of exhibits shown at these expositions. This notion of progress is supported in the Westinghouse-commissioned *All's Fair at the Fair*, but approached with a critical eye and cautious wonder in *Modern Inventions* and *Dog Gone Modern*.

Chronologically the first of the three cartoons, Donald Duck's 1937 journey through the Museum of Modern Marvels in *Modern Inventions* is a humorous look at the issues of automation. Though the content of the cartoon emerged first from Disney cartoonist Carl Barks' barbershop chair gag in which Donald is caught in an automated haircut and shave contraption,⁶ the exhibition hall framework for these jokes was likely influenced by Walt Disney's visit to the 1933 Century of Progress. The cartoon begins with a gag in which Donald subverts the turnstile technology by using a coin attached to a string to eschew the entrance fee—retaining the idea of frugality in an era of significant economic downturn and implying that technologies of progress should be freely accessible in order to benefit society. The establishing shot inside the hall is shown at a high angle, revealing a number of indeterminate mechanical contraptions that set the scene of the exhibition. The rest of the cartoon is animated at Donald's level, so this moment is important for establishing a sense of scale and wonder.

The influence of the 1933 fair is clear. Much like the fairgoers who were greeted by Louise Lentz Woodruff's robot sculpture in the *Fountain of Science*,⁷ Donald is greeted by a robot butler—conceived by animators Carl Barks and Jack King—at the hall's entrance.⁸ As Cheryl Ganz observes, performing robots of the period in works of fiction were often depicted as out-of-control⁹ and this nemesis was no exception. Donald's initial optimism is spoiled as the robot welcomes him and "courteously" take his hat, setting up a recurring gag in which every time Donald puts on a hat the robot comes to take it. Robots had recently been introduced at events such as the 1936 Texas Centennial Exposition, in which the Department of Labor constructed a "talking" "Mechanical Man" that evangelized its benefit to industry.¹⁰ Willie Vocalite, the hefty metal "moto-man" Westinghouse had on display at

Century of Progress, could do little with its articulated limbs. The medium of animation, on the other hand, was not limited to technological capabilities, and was in a unique place to bring automatons to life. Instead, it could focus on visual and audio design, behavior, and interaction.

Donald's robotic adversary is constructed out of metal, based on a human bi-pedal form, has one large eye and a mouth, and speaks like a British butler in a normal human voice. The prototypical synthesized robot voice had yet to be invented; pre-recorded human voices were used for the robots Westinghouse had demonstrated in the 1920s and 30s.¹¹ Roy J. Wensley's 1927 Televox, which had yet to take humanoid form, responded to input using clicks and buzzes.¹² The Televox robot was later given a cardboard body with a face and arms, was nicknamed Herbert, and finally received an output voice in the form of a "talking movie" filmstrip that would play pre-recorded messages.¹³ Donald's automaton was far more articulate—in both limbs and voice—than these progenitor robots. The only indication of the inner-workings of the cartoon robot butler was the sound of a ticking clock assumed to be its heart and a bit of exposed wiring shown on its back. The depiction of this robot is in line with the imagined future, not the practical future.

One of the exhibits Donald visits features a robot of a different sort. Stored inside a suitcase is the "Hitch-Hiker's Aid," a robot that thumbs for rides "while you sleep." Donald pantomimes driving past the suitcase and the robot springs to action, bouncing on its springy legs, flashing a stop sign in its big grin, and holding its thumb out as Donald passes. Not only does this imply hitchhiking is a practice common enough to merit innovation, but the device itself is also amusingly unpractical—who could possibly afford a robot dedicated to something like this when they cannot afford their own transportation? However, practicality is not the concern of the cartoon. The automated technologies the Museum of Modern Marvels turn the common and mundane into luxury.

Modern Inventions also draws influence from another film that explores the mechanization of society: *Chaplin's Modern Times* (1936). At another point in the cartoon, Donald gets caught in the cogs of two inventions, unable to escape their trappings. The first is a bundle-wrapping machine that grabs Donald with its mechanical arms, wraps him in plastic, and ties a bow around him. This scene alludes to the Tramp being pulled into the gears and cogs of the factory in *Modern Times*. The second similarity is a barber chair that accidentally flips Donald upside down and gives him a haircut on his rear. He is unable to escape the contraption because it has him clamped down at the waist and wrists. While the arms of the automated chair give him a haircut, a phonograph amplifier makes small talk with Donald's tail, and his face receives a shoe-shine. This scene alludes to the force-feeding chair that Chaplin gets strapped to in *Modern Times*. Though both humorous gags, they are cautionary tales of automation. In both examples Donald gets pulled into the mechanism through mere curiosity and is caught in processes he is unable to control. *Modern Inventions* maintains

a conflicted view of these modern marvels and some have suggested that through humor and story, Disney “sought to cushion the negative impact of the machine age.”¹⁴ Despite the problems with each exhibit and escalating frustration, Donald remains amused by the technologies and hopeful that they are not destined to fail him.

Warner Bros.’ 1939 Merrie Melodies cartoon *Dog Gone Modern*, which historian Michael Barrier claims draws direct influence from Disney’s portrayal of new technologies in *Modern Inventions*,¹⁵ is the story of two curious dogs who enter a technologically advanced model home. The “home of tomorrow” was a phrase developed in the late 1920s to describe a house of “materialistic or technological artifact.”¹⁶ In order to be accepted as modern, a house had to generally meet one or more of three criteria: it needed to be stylistically avant-garde, include use of sophisticated household services and technologies, or be mass-producible. During this period houses began to incorporate electrical wiring, making them usable with new domestic appliances and opening up the imagination to a world of futuristic electric appliances. And though the Great Depression stunted the development of the practical home of tomorrow, designs like Buckminster Fuller’s Dymaxion House (1927) and George Fred Keck’s “House of Tomorrow” exhibit at the 1933 Chicago Century of Progress Fair brought the house of futuristic convenience into the American imagination.

Three interrelated questions can be asked of the home of tomorrow in *Dog Gone Modern*: what inventions are shown, how are they depicted, and how do the dogs interact with them? The last of these questions is perhaps most important, as the animated medium, lets the dogs, like Donald, stand in for the kind of primal curiosity that a human might exhibit in such a situation. Their small size also means they can be physically manipulated differently by the technologies. Like the Disney cartoon, *Dog Gone Modern* unfolds as a series of gags based around moving from one technology to the next. And, like Donald Duck, they are sometimes the initiators of the action and other times trapped by contraptions they have no control over. Also like Donald, the dogs exhibit some human behavior such as reading comprehension and occasional human-like reactions.

The cartoon opens with the dogs approaching the house. The sign outside, written in an art deco font, reads “All Electronic Model Home / Open for Inspection / Visitors Welcome / Come In.” They read the sign and make their way to the front door. The first invention the dogs encounter is a beam of light that senses their presence and automatically opens the door. However, the short dog walks right under the beam, which is only activated by the large dog. Surprised, the large dog begins growling while the small dog cowers in the bushes. These reactions set the tone for the rest of the house: inventions are met with first with curiosity, then aggression, and finally resignation. Upon entering the home the dogs are greeted by a speaker that, unlike the robot butler in *Modern Inventions*, speaks with a classically robotic monotone cadence, likely modeled after Westinghouse’s 1937 robot, Elektro. This Moto-man was on display the same year as the cartoon at the 1939 New York World’s Fair. Elektro’s robot-like voice was provided by two record turntables with pre-cued records in place and it spoke slowly, taking time between syllables to affect the

illusion of vocoder synthesized speech.¹⁷ The most notable of vocoder technologies—Bell Lab’s Voder—was also on display that same year and likely influenced Elektro’s sound. The similarities between the cartoon voice, the Voder, and Elektro demonstrate an emerging portrayal of robots in popular culture.

Like Donald’s robot in *Modern Inventions*, the robot the dogs encounter follows them throughout the cartoon because it is unable to circumvent its programmed behavior. This robot has a unique design: it stands upright but has wheels, has fully functional arms and hands, but no head. As a clean-up robot, it is triggered to come and sweep any time a mess is made. Much to the chagrin of the small dog, the housekeeping robot considers the bone dropped on the floor from an automatic dispenser a piece of garbage and steals it to dispose of it. The robot exhibits the rigidity of its programming as it hunts down the small dog after it had tried to steal back the bone. Ultimately, it is only once the small dog destroys the robot that the cycle ends the dog can enjoy the treat promised to him by the automatic bone dispenser.

The cartoon again warns of the effects of automation when the dogs are pulled into mechanisms they cannot escape. One recurring gag depicts the large dog being dragged through the sink by the robotic dishwasher. In another scene, the small dog laughs at the concept of an automated napkin folder, only to be pulled into the painful contraption which folds his body, pulls his ears, and wraps him in a napkin ring. The little dog is also subjected to the seemingly harmless automated piano, which stuffs him inside instruments, beats him like a drum, and blares in his ears. *Dog Gone Modern* is consistently critical about the potential for modern domestic technology, alluding to the frivolity of unnecessary appliances and the inherent flaws of automation.

Unlike Disney’s *Modern Inventions* or Warner Bros *Dog Gone Modern*, Fleischer Studios’ 1938 *All’s Fair at the Fair* is a celebratory look at the possibilities for modern convenience. The cartoon creates this positive interpretation in two distinct ways: first, by showing the main characters of the film—a couple of country bumpkins—as they visit the spaces of the fair, observing and commenting on exhibits; second, by illustrating how through participating directly in a handful of the exhibits, the couple is transformed from yokels into modern citizens.

The Fleischer Color Classic was a part of a Paramount newsreel focused on promoting the United States’ technological promise in the face of the ongoing war in Europe.¹⁸ The newsreel opens with a cheerful song about “the world’s at the fair,” referring to it as a place that everybody visits, emphasizing its spectacle, and noting its historical significance. Following the credits, the scene opens on a sign that reads “World’s Fair Opens Here To-Day!” As the camera pulls out, an empty landscape is revealed. It is not until a flood of people pour into the space that the architectural structure is constructed. Cartoon versions of the iconic Trylon and Perisphere foreground the image and tie the cartoon directly to

the actual 1939 New York World's Fair. The viewer is cued to the immensity of the event by the sheer number of fair-goers. In addition to a large rush of people entering the gates on foot, sardine-tin modeled trains bring waves of visitors quickly and efficiently. The entrance of these masses sets the scene for the main story, which follows a married couple riding in on a horse-drawn buggy.

All's Fair at the Fair features Elmer and Miranda (Mirandy, as she is lovingly referred to by her husband), the New York World's Fair promotional characters who represented the everyman. Elmer and Miranda are meant to typify country folk who have come to see the marvels of the World's Fair. They are characterized by strong country accents and their outdated mode of transportation. Once they "park" their horse-drawn carriage, they make their way through the entrance to the fairgrounds. Using a multi-plane camera to emphasize the immersive quality of the fair at this moment in the story, *All's Fair at the Fair* is the only one of the three cartoons that uses foreground space for architectural structures. However, this is one of the only moments in the cartoon in which bold objects are placed in the foreground, suggesting that the entrance to the fairground is an important space of transition.

Once inside the fair, Elmer and Miranda encounter a number of fantastic inventions. Rather than depict the actual innovations of the fair, the cartoon plays with the medium of animation's ability to depict fantasy. A knitting machine pulls the wool directly from a sheep and dispenses a completed sweater for the couple. Another machine presses whole table-and-chair sets from the trunk of a tree, while yet another other machine whittles a giant log down to a single clothespin. Another contraption drops all the building materials of a house in through the chimney of a house-shaped mold, shakes it about, and produces a fully fabricated home, complete with yard. Future technologies are portrayed as magical, and brought to life by animation's ability to depict impossible prototypes.

The 1939 New York World's Fair was designed around pavilions and buildings dedicated to themes, nations, or specific companies showing off their visions of the future. The pavilion shown in *All's Fair at the Fair* is dedicated to down-home practicality: "haircut-shave, dining-dancing." At this point in the story Elmer and Miranda begin to participate directly in the exhibits. Like Donald Duck in *Modern Inventions*, Elmer climbs into a mechanized barber's chair. But rather than being subjected to the flaws of automation, he is treated to a line of robots dedicated to single tasks that successfully treat him to a shave and a haircut. Meanwhile, his wife enters the beauty parlor and undergoes an elaborate test-tube and beaker treatment that looks more like a scientific laboratory than a hairdresser's shop. She is also subjected to a painful looking contraption that pampers her skin and applies makeup. Finally, she enters body-shaped mold that squeezes her frumpy form into a curvaceous body. Fairgoers were not strangers to these kinds of transformative promises. At the Chicago fair of 1933, the Formfit Company promoted "Thrill" brassieres and "Sleek" girdles to restrain excess flesh "into smooth, firm contours," while the 1939 New York World's

Fair featured a whole section called the World of Fashion.¹⁹ These cartoon scenes reflect an ideology present at the fairs, claiming that technology can affect change throughout all aspects of the world, including one's own appearance.

As J.P. Telotte observes, the purpose of the film is to show the "individual transformation wrought by their [Elmer and Miranda's] visit." The fair's role in showing transformative technology is realized in the eventual sophistications of the country-couple. The feature ends with Elmer and Miranda having learned to dance from a pair of robots, after which the newly chic couple exits the pavilion joyously. Their transformation is completed when Elmer purchases a fancy roadster car from a vending machine, assembling it like a puppet. They celebrate the purchase of their new "gas buggy," and drive off into the sunset with their two horses sitting in the backseat, leaving their old carriage behind. The evolution of these characters supports the cartoon's message that technologies of the fair can have immediate impact in improving the lives of its attendees, a stark contrast to the Disney and Warner Bros. cartoons.

The three cartoons about exhibitions are among many artifacts of popular culture that reflect the radically changing ideals of the early twentieth century. Perhaps the enduring appeal of such depictions is due to the qualities Michael O'Pray identifies, suggesting that animation allows us to exert a "phantasy of control" and "our desire to will something without in fact acting upon it."²¹ *Modern Inventions, Dog Gone Modern, and All's Fair at the Fair* provided sites of negotiation for their creators and audiences alike to explore the possibilities—anticipated as both pleasurable and terrifying—of the technologies of the future.

¹John E. Findling and Kimberly D. Pelle, *Historical Dictionary of World's Fairs and Expositions, 1851-1998* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1990), 294.

²Robert W. Rydell, *World of Fairs* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 124.

³Joseph J. Corn and Brian Horrigan, *Yesterday's Tomorrow* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984), xiv.

⁴Findling, 266.

⁵Findling, 293.

⁶Tom Andrae, *Carl Barks and the Disney Comic Book: Unmaking the Myth of Modernity* (Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 2006), 33.

⁷Cheryl R. Ganz, *The 1933 Chicago World's Fair: A Century of Progress* (Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press), 56.

⁸Carl Barks, *Carl Barks: Conversations*, ed. Donald Ault (Jackson, MI: University Press of Mississippi, 2003), 38.

⁹Ganz, 56.

¹⁰Rydell, 151.

¹¹Scott Schaut, *Robots of Westinghouse, 1924–Today* (Ohio: Mansfield Memorial Museum, 2007), 149.

¹²Herbert F. Powell, "Machines That Think," *Popular Science Monthly*, January 1928, 12-13, retrieved from <http://cyberneticzoo.com/?p=656>.

¹³"Televox Acquires Voice; Mechanical Man Uses Phone," *Popular Science Monthly* October 1928, 70.

¹⁴Steven Watts, *The Magic Kingdom: Walt Disney and the American Way of Life* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1997), 75.

¹⁵Michael Barrier, *Hollywood Cartoons: American Animation in its Golden Age* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 357.

¹⁶Corn, 64.

¹⁷Schaut, 149.

¹⁸J.P. Telotte, *A Distant Technology: Science Fiction Film and the Machine Age*, (Hanover, NH: Wesleyan University Press, 1999), 177.

¹⁹Rydell, 144.

²⁰Telotte, 178.

²¹Paul Wells, *Understanding Animation* (New York: Routledge, 1998), 228.

8.2.

Emerging from the Shadows: Japan Pavilion Promotional Materials at the 1964/65 New York World's Fair.

Dr. Lori C. Walters

World's fairs are born from a societal desire to showcase the wonders of science and technology—they are a calling card to the future. When the 1964/65 New York World's Fair (NYWF) opened, the giants of American industry spared no expense in the development of elaborate pavilions. This was a Space-Age Fair, looking to the glorious technological wonderland that science would provide us in the future. With *Futurama II* General Motors set out to reveal how technology would conquer the harshest environments for the betterment of humanity. The Bell System provided visitors a glimpse into the future of telecommunications with the *Picture Phone*. General Electric's *Progressland* demonstrated the potential limitless power of nuclear fusion that could be harnessed by man. Mesmerized by the depictions of the wondrous distant future presented by US industry, few Americans realized the near future of the 1970s outlined at what was a seemingly innocuous pavilion: Japan. An examination of promotional materials addressing the Japan Pavilion reveals a nation declaring a technological challenge to the Fair's host nation and a glimpse into that near future.

The Second World War had been less than a generation earlier; for many older Americans exploring the Japan Pavilion at the 1964/65 NYWF, their view of Japan was still that of a defeated nation. Those born after the conflict equated Japan with inexpensive transistor radios, Godzilla flicks at the drive-in movie theater and shoddy "Made in Japan" toys that lasted a short period of time before breaking. Japan contributed one of the largest pavilions amongst the Fair's international participants. Configured as a hybrid of modern and traditional architectural styles, the pavilion was comprised of three primary structures. The Government building showcased exhibits that exemplified Japan's "highly advanced technology,"¹ the second showcased the nation's leading industrial companies and the final focused on traditional Japanese culture and food.² Within the pavilion's walls, the traditional cultural exhibits of ancient Noh masks, woodblock prints and elaborate tea services were overshadowed by the corporate manifestations of Japan's post-war "economic miracle."³

The timing of New York World's Fair in 1964 was significant for Japan on several levels. Economically, Japan became an International Monetary Fund Article VIII nation, thereby relinquishing internal protection from foreign competition.⁴ Japan External Trade

Organization brochures available at the Pavilion noted a list of impressive industrial rankings for a nation one 1/21th the size of the United States. Through their post war economic miracle, Japan ranked first in shipbuilding, motorcycles, cameras and microscopes; second in production of synthetic fibers and television receivers; third in production of crude steel and fifth in automobiles with a staggering increase from 482,256 units in 1960 to 1,283,488 units in 1963.⁵ On a high-tech front, the nation unveiled the *Shinkansen* bullet train, in October. With a top speed of 160 MPH, the world's first inter-city high speed rail was a technological marvel and source of national pride akin to America's march to the lunar surface. Unlike Project Apollo, the *Shinkansen* experience could be shared by all for the price of a train ticket. Finally, Japan hosted the first non-Western Summer Olympic Games. The 1964 Tokyo games showcased the new Japan described in a Fair brochure, as a nation who desired "to occupy an honored place in an international society striving for the preservation of peace, and the banishment of tyranny and slavery, oppression and intolerance for all time from the earth. We recognize that all peoples of the world have the right to live in peace, free from fear and want."⁶ The war was firmly in the past and Japan now focused on its industrial future.



Figure 1. One in a series of cards from a Matsushita Electric (National Panasonic) give-a-way.

Invented by engineers at Bell Telephone Laboratories in 1947, the transistor revolutionized electronics through miniaturization and reliability. It was a key component in much of the technology on display at the Fair—from the Telstar satellite to the televisions at the RCA and Japan pavilions. Bell Systems participated in the Fair in spectacular style, wowing the crowds with their vision of future telecommunications, not focusing on the small

component that could make those visions a future reality. While it may not have invented the transistor, arrangements with US electronics firms throughout the 1950s permitted Japanese companies to manufacture the low-end Germanium transistors in large quantities.⁷ By the opening of the World's Fair, Japan had become synonymous with the transistor radio. Matsushita-Panasonic sought to convince the American consumer of their mastery of transistor production and with it the quality of their electronics beyond that of the simple hand held transistor radio. One of Matsushita's publicity give-a-ways claimed "The superiority of Japanese transistors is the combined result of advanced scientific research, modernized production technique, ideal working conditions and most importantly, the deft and nimble fingers of the patient skilled women operators" (Fig. 1).⁸ Matsushita-Panasonic was not alone in professing the quality of their transistors and with it their product line. Advertising in the official New York World's Fair guidebook, Fujitsu Limited pronounced they manufactured their transistors to be "absolutely sure of the quality" of their products—including computers. It should come as no surprise that Japan's leading industrial giants provided a wide array of exhibits on the quality of items American consumers could readily purchase if they stopped at Macy's or Gimbels on their way home from the Fairgrounds. From Hitachi's all-transistorized 5-inch portable television to the Seiko stop watch models that would be the official time keeper of the 1964 Olympic Games—each depicted the "superior qualities of the products"⁹ (Fig. 2). One soon-to-be consumer standard was showcased at the Fair by Sony, The "completely portable" 145 pound Videocorder was now "rolling off Sony's production lines in Japan" and this time there was no American counterpart. Japan had moved from imitator to originator.¹⁰



Figure 2. Tik-Tok the Seiko 'robot' marched in front of the Japan Pavilion – Seiko Promotional Postcard.

As the American chemical giant DuPont entertained fairgoers with their popular “Wonderful World of Chemistry” musical review promoting the company’s advances in synthetic fibers through a lavish production of song and dance, the Toyo Rayon Company (Toray) sought to educate visitors on Japan’s synthetic fiber and plastics industry. Toray’s promotional literature distributed at the Japan Pavilion, presented two significant messages to fairgoers—the high quality standards and the production capacity of the Japanese synthetic fiber industry. Seeking to reverse the American consumer’s perception of the inferiority of Japanese products, the literature focuses on the “high industrial standards of Japan” as a whole and “the quality of every Toray product.” To support the claims within the literature, the intricate and finely detailed traditional kimonos on display were manufactured not from silk, but from Toray’s synthetic fibers. What is most revealing about the Toray literature is their focus on production, announcing they were “third in the world and first in Japan as a maker of synthetic fibers.” Its nylon, polyester, polypropylene, acrylic and plastics were shipped worldwide “helping people to lead easier, richer lives.” Through the exploration of “all the frontiers of petrochemistry” their goals were to “make Toray one of the world’s largest integrated chemical industrial companies” and that we should. “Watch Toray!”¹¹

When fairgoers explored the General Motors Pavilion, they were continually reminded of GM’s standing as the world’s largest manufacturer of automobiles. Few then could have envisioned Toyota would wrest that title from the American giant in 2008. Collectively, the “Big Three” US automobile manufactures (General Motors, Ford and Chrysler) invested in excess of \$92 million in their pavilions—this figure being 1964 dollars.¹² At the Ford Pavilion, the full stable of Ford convertibles served as time machines transporting visitors from the age of dinosaurs to the distant future. Chrysler allowed fairgoers to take a turn behind the wheel of what could have been the next generation automobile: the Turbine Car. In 1962, Japan exported less than 50,000 motor vehicle units worldwide.¹³ The “Big 2 of Japan”—Toyota and Nissan/Datsun were still relatively new players in the US market with Toyota being the first to export a Japanese passenger car to the US in 1957.¹⁴ In an era of inexpensive gasoline, Americans were still enamored with large eight cylinder automobiles. The two vehicles on display at the Japan Pavilion, the Toyota *Corona* and Datsun 1600/*Fairlady* were far from their distant American cousins in both appearance and performance and simply could not compete with the frenzy surrounding the unveiling of Ford’s Mustang at the Fair. Of the general pavilion materials surveyed, the Japanese automobile industry was not spotlighted, clearly noting while they would be able to make immediate gains in familiarizing Americans with their products, the automobile was not one of these areas. Even the pavilion’s automotive industry press release focused on Hino Motors latest diesel engine over the passenger vehicles. However, it prophetically noted that its automotive industry would greatly contribute to the nation’s economic growth in the “years to come.”¹⁵

The “must-see” list at this World’s Fair was impressive. Four pavilions featured experiences designed by Walt Disney, including *It’s a Small World* and the *Carousel of Progress*. ‘Life-sized’ dinosaurs at Sinclair Oil’s *Dinoland* and an expansive space/rocket park attracted



Figure 3. Hitachi advertisement in the 1965 edition of the Official World's Fair Guidebook.

through electronics” and reinforced the pavilion’s overall theme of quality and innovation through Japan’s products.¹⁷ For the 1965 edition of the guide book Japan returned with twelve advertisements. Hitachi Corporation asserted the most direct assault on the American perception on the quality of Japanese products. A full page color advertisement displayed a transistor radio and portable television set with a declaration of “Made in Japan—1965 Style” (Fig. 3). Here Hitachi noted “Today, “Made in Japan” means quality. Unsurpassed quality—respected throughout the world.”¹⁸

By the opening of the 1964/65 New York World’s Fair, Japan had made impressive strides in its export figures to the United States. Export totals to the US were hovering slightly below its import levels from the U.S.¹⁹ This was achieved within a decade of U.S. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles informing Japanese leaders they “should not expect to find a big U.S. market because the Japanese don’t make things we want.”²⁰ The Japan Pavilion literature at 64/65 New York World’s Fair reveals a nation focused on using its appearance at the Fair as a tool to further economic growth more than one of cultural exchange. This was a Japan in the midst of an economic boom and was seeking to extend this period of expansion. While political and economic forces in the 1970s led to changes in the purchase choices of American consumers, it was the change in perception of the quality of

children as if they were flies. Fairgoers waited in line for hours to experience IBM’s *Information Machine* and General Motor’s *Futurama II*. With such competition, there was no guarantee visitors would make a pilgrimage to the Pavilion of a nation of a recent enemy to tour their exhibits and be exposed to their promotional literature. Beckoning visitors to the pavilion or at the very least familiarizing Americans with the names and achievements of Japanese products, the 1964 edition of the *Official New York World’s Fair Guide* contained fourteen advertisements featuring the achievements of the nation’s industry and artisans. No other nation advertised with such intensity and only the US hard-liquor industry equaled this exposure within the 1964 guidebook. These advertisements featured the *Shinkansen* bullet train, home electronics, and the art of flower arranging. With an image of their 98 foot diameter satellite dish, NEC’s advertisement pronounced they were “Forging the future

Japanese products that led to Japanese domination of what had been industrial strengths of the United States. Ironically, as Americans toured a Fair that predicted a future led by the strength of American industry, the reality was one outlined within the confines of the Japan Pavilion.

¹How to See the Japan Pavilion, (New York: Japan Trade Center, June 1964), 6.

²Japan Pavilion brochure, Japanese Exhibitors' Association, no date.

³How to See the *Japan Pavilion*, 1.

⁴Ibid, 1.

⁵*The 1860's to 1960's from Feudalism to the Edge of Space*. Japan Pavilion Map.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Choi Hyungsub, "Technology Importation, Corporate Strategies, and the Rise of the Japanese Semiconductor Industry in the 1950s," *Comparative Technology Transfer and Security*, volume 6, number 2 2008: 105-106.

⁸Matsushita Electric Collector Cards.

⁹*How to See the Japan Pavilion*, 22.

¹⁰Japan Trade Center Sony Videocorder press release prepared by Ruder & Finn Incorporated. No date.

¹¹*This is Toray, Japan* brochure prepared by Toyo Rayon Co., Ltd., no date.

¹²Lawrence Samuel, *The End of Innocence: The 1964-65 New York World's Fair* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2007), 98.

¹³Japan Trade Center automotive industry press release prepared by Ruder & Finn Incorporated, no date.

¹⁴"History of Toyota," Toyota Corporation, accessed March 17, 2011, http://www.toyota-global.com/company/history_of_toyota/1950-1959.html.

¹⁵Japan Trade Center, Automotive industry press release prepared by Ruder & Finn Incorporated, no date.

¹⁶Numbers observed from the 1964 edition of the *Official Guide New York World's Fair 1964/1965*.

¹⁷*Official Guide New York World's Fair 1964/1965* (New York: Time Inc., 1964), 95.

¹⁸*1965 Official Guide New York World's Fair 1964/1965* (New York: Time Inc., 1965), 135.

¹⁹Statistics sources were provided by the Japanese Ministry of Finance in the *How to See the Japan Pavilion* Booklet.

²⁰John W. Dower, *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II* (New York: W.W. Norton,1999), 537.

8.3.

To Work and Play and Live in the Year 2000: Creating the Future at the 1962 Seattle World's Fair

Stacy Warren

While not as well known as its successor two years later in New York, the 1962 Seattle World's Fair dazzled audiences with its space age themes and quietly forged a new relationship between leisure, consumerism, and urban space. Not only was it the first American fair officially sanctioned by the International Bureau of Expositions in twenty-three years, it also made the boldest attempt yet of any fair to use the event as an urban redevelopment tool. The Seattle Fair, known as the Century 21 Exposition, captured a unique moment in time and translated that into a blueprint for the city of the future. Excitement about new space technologies, fears over the Cold War, optimism about suburban progress, and outright delight with Disneyland, a new kind of tourist destination that had recently opened, all played into the themes, design, and implementation of the Seattle World's Fair and the lasting contributions it made. For six months in 1962, fair visitors could stroll through a landscape that hinted at the wonders of a future made better by science, technology, and international cooperation. Much of the fair site is still intact now: Seattle residents and visitors alike can still journey to the top of the Space Needle, ride the Monorail, and tour several other iconic structures that were built for the fair but intended to serve the city well into the very future that was hinted at back in 1962.

A TOUR OF THE CENTURY 21 EXPOSITION GROUNDS

On April 21, 1962 President John F. Kennedy pressed a telegraph key in Palm Beach, Florida that sent a message to a computer in Andover, Maryland, which caused a radio telescope to be repositioned to point at the star Cassiopeia and intersect a light wave, which was then relayed back to Seattle, Washington.¹ The Century 21 Exposition was officially open.

"Welcome to the future," visitors were told when they picked up their official Rand McNally map of the fair. The map detailed the pavilions, attractions, and pathways of the fair's seventy-four acres. Five different "worlds" conceptually divided the fairgrounds: the World of Science, the World of Commerce and Industry, the World of Century 21, the World of Art, and the World of Entertainment (Fig. 1). No one could miss the fair's signature skyline element, the 605-foot tall Space Needle (Fig. 2). Visitors might have been conveyed to the Fair in another bigger-than-life innovation that still forms a part of Seattle's urban fabric, the futuristic Monorail (Fig. 3). Several other stunning buildings ringed the Needle, including

CENTURY 21 1962 Seattle World's Fair

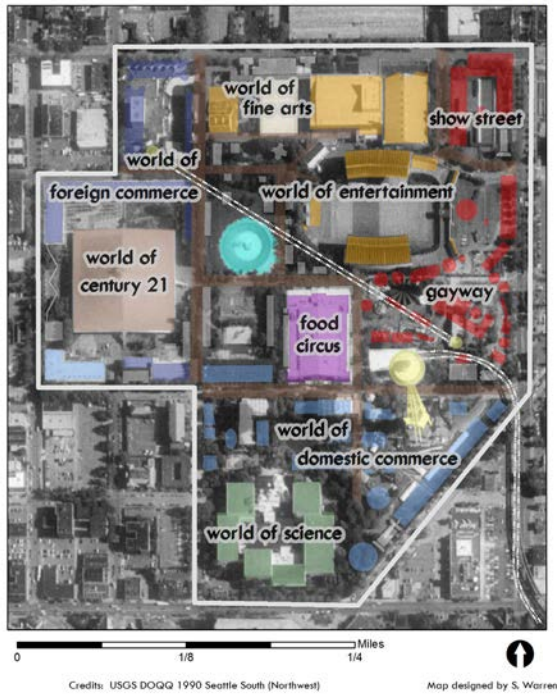


Figure 1. Overview map of the fair.



Figure 2. The fair's signature skyline element, the Space Needle.

the Washington State Pavilion (subsequent home of the Seattle Supersonics basketball team), and the first significant commission by architect Minoru Yamasaki (later of Pruitt-Igoe and World Trade Center fame), and the United States Science Pavilion which would become the Pacific Science Center (Fig. 4). Axial pathways known as “Boulevards of the World” radiated out from the International Fountain to define the general edges of each “world

Between April 21 and October 21, 1962, visitors to the Seattle World's Fair enjoyed the culmination of efforts involving Washington State civic and business leaders, teams of scientists, artists, representatives from sixteen different nations, and—not insignificantly—several key employees of the Walt Disney Company. As a quick tour of each of the five worlds will show, Disney's involvement in Seattle was quite unlike its high profile presence two years later in New York. In fact, you could not encounter a single Disney-designed pavilion or attraction in any of the Century 21 worlds. Instead, you would find throughout the whole fair the subtle but pervasive mark of Disney's ability to organize and manage urban space so that, in the words of Seattle fair controller Russell T. Mowry, “everything worked so smoothly and orderly.”² The seventy-four acre grounds, though small by world's fair standards, were intended by fair planners, with Disney's help, to live on intact as “an animated jewel mined from the intellect and creativity of scientist, artists, and men of vision.”³



Figure 3. Visitors prepare to ride the fair's monorail.



Figure 4. The United States Science Exhibit six-building complex.

GETTING THE BEST IN THE WORLD... DISNEY'S ROLE IN THE SEATTLE WORLD'S FAIR

The Seattle World's Fair was the first international exhibition staged in a post-Disneyland era. The significance of this fact was not lost on fair planners. As early as 1958, consultant Walter van Camp warned Seattle planners that audiences expected a whole new generation of family-oriented amusement centers "as a result of the success of Disneyland."⁴ Hence it is no surprise that one of the first tasks fair planners undertook was a site visit to the Disney Studios in Burbank. In May 1958, the Seattle contingent met with Roy Disney and high-level Disney administrators Card Walker and Donn Tatum. They were successful in their mission to interest Disney

in the fair. Tatum was designated Century 21's Disney contact, ushering in two years of close negotiations with the company.

Walt Disney's experience with world's fairs dated back to the 1939/1940 New York World's Fair where he created a four-minute cartoon for the Nabisco Pavilion; for the later 1958 Brussels Fair he designed the more substantive and wildly popular Circarama Attraction for the United States Pavilion.⁵ The four attractions Disney would later design for the 1964 New York World's Fair survived to become permanent theme park fixtures: the General Electric pavilion became the Carousel of Progress, the State of Illinois Exhibit became Mr. Lincoln, the Pepsi Cola pavilion became the It's a Small World attraction, and even the Ford Magic Skyway dinosaurs moved to Disneyland. But Disney left no visible traces in the Seattle Century 21 landscape in the form of attractions or exhibits. Instead, Disney supplied the vision for a smoothly operating city—a new image of urbanity that can still be seen on the ground today.

Four Disney employees were hired full-time to help plan the fair. Their role was strictly behind-the-scenes, their advice sought on management and operations such as the handling of guests and employee relations, land ownership and concessionary agreements, parking facilities, insurance policies, fire and security arrangements, and surveillance systems.⁶ The Alweg Monorail, for example, already a landmark at Disneyland, was recommended to represent Century 21's transportation of the future. More detailed statistics on market penetration, projected attendance, site location, financial planning, traffic control, and peripheral property planning were generated through long-time Disney partner Economics Research Associations.⁷

In short, Century 21 fair planners sought out the Disney Company to help them design an image of urbanity that would symbolically and literally replace the chaos and blight increasingly characteristic of American inner cities. Civic leaders and the media alike repeatedly referred to the old Warren neighborhood, the site selected for Century 21, as a slum area plagued by dilapidated buildings, increasing crime rates and decreasing family-oriented populations. Interviewed decades later, Fair General Manager Ewen C. Dingwall recalled that Century 21 planners hoped the fair and subsequent civic center would help lure the consumption- and tourist-friendly central business district northward by offering the suburban conveniences of landscaped green spaces, pedestrian walkways, ample parking, and easy freeway access.⁸ With virtually no opposition, a total of 203 buildings including duplexes, apartment buildings, commercial structures, a fire station, an elementary school, and a playground were demolished between July and October 1959⁹; only eight structures survived. In May, 1961, the streets themselves were ordered vacated by city ordinance, thus removing the last traces of the old Warren neighborhood.

Fair planners had, in effect, a seventy-four acre blank slate upon which to create their vision. As John Findlay argues, theirs was a distinctly suburban urban vision.¹⁰ With Disney's help, the Century 21 Exposition site would fulfill its promise to "preview the ways man will

work and play and live in the year 2000.”¹¹ Fair planners designed permanent city spaces to last into the future that served culture (an opera house, art gallery, large outdoor mural, and decorative fountain), science and technology (a permanent science center), sports competitions (a Coliseum), transportation (the monorail and the Space Needle’s death-defying elevator), dining (the Food Circus and the Space Needle’s revolving restaurant), and recreation (acres of landscaped green space). They turned to other experts outside of Disney to help shape the thematic messages guests would encounter in the five worlds of the fair, but Disney provided the vision of the underlying urban fabric.

WORLD OF SCIENCE

From the earliest planning stages, science was promoted as the defining characteristic of the fair. Fair planners hoped the Century 21 Exposition would stand out from other fairs precisely because it did *not* look to the past. Instead, it would communicate to fairgoers crucial messages about the modern world: that the role of science in human affairs was key to the future of the human race; that science relied on international cooperation; and that the pairing of science and industry was natural and beneficial.¹²

The World of Science would be the “jewel box of the Exposition and intended to make the greatest impression on visitors.”¹³ It was the most discussed and best funded pavilion at the Exposition. A team of over one hundred scientists helped plan the exhibit.¹⁴ The United States government, in the midst of the Cold War and recently embarrassed by the Soviet launch of the satellite Sputnik, appropriated \$9.5 million dollars toward the exhibit; in its support, President Eisenhower maintained, “we must constantly state and demonstrate our belief that increased scientific knowledge must be used for the benefit of man.”¹⁵

The project would come to life as the United States Science Exhibit, a vast six-acre coordinated structure that, as one of its lead designers explained, “would tell a coherent story aimed at providing a better understanding and enjoyment of science.”¹⁶ The six-building complex with its signature soaring gothic arches and reflecting pools was designed by architect Minoru Yamasaki (Fig. 4). Visitors were guided counter-clockwise through what was to date the largest science exhibit ever created for a world’s fair. They were seated on the carpeted floor of a chair-less darkened theater where they watched a ten-minute film created specifically for the exhibit by Charles and Ray Eames.¹⁷ Visitors were then ushered into subsequent buildings, including “The Development of Science” where they could witness examples of “the triumphant story of man’s long search for knowledge about his universe,”¹⁸ the “Spacearium” where they were taken on a ten-minute “60-thousand-billion-billion-mile round trip into space” sponsored by the Boeing Company,¹⁹ and the “Horizons of Science” where visitors could experience what the Official Guide Book described as a “single monolithic exhibit here to reinforce a single dominant impression—that science and its resulting technology can be used by society to increase and enlarge its own horizons.”²⁰ From there, the floor rotated guests directly to the exit, where they

walked back out into the fresh air amid the U.S. Science Exhibit's reflecting pools, ready to take the message of scientific progress with them through the rest of the fair. In fact, one could see the contributions of science and technology everywhere. Whether visitors next headed east to the World of Commerce and Industry, or turned north to the World of Century 21, they encountered worlds made better through science.

WORLD OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

Unlike the carefully controlled environment of the World of Science, the World of Commerce and Industry was a loosely organized and geographically scattered collection of domestic and foreign "industry." Visitors were forewarned the exhibits here "var[ie]d greatly in style and content," and the guidebook gave detailed instructions on how to find them in their various locations across the fairgrounds.²¹ The domestic entries in the World of Commerce and Industry were located in the southern half of the fair in the shadow of the Space Needle. Several major corporations sponsored science- and technology-based pavilions. At the Ford Motor Company Pavilion, visitors entered a gold, aluminum-trimmed geodesic dome for a fifteen-minute simulated space journey, "Adventure in Outer Space."²² The open-air IBM pavilion utilized poplar trees as living walls to create three "gardens of learning" tracing "15,000 years of Man's thought" that culminated in the invention of the computer.²³ Nalley's Space Age Theatre was built entirely of "curving lines, without a straight line or sharp angle"; visitors quickly associated the shape with a giant potato chip, one of Nalley's products. At both the Home of the Immediate Future and its neighbor the Home of Living Light for Tomorrow, plywood was touted as the domestic building material of tomorrow. In the General Electric Pavilion, foreshadowing the GE exhibit Walt Disney would unveil at the New York World's Fair two years later, visitors were invited inside the fictitious Larsen family home to marvel at their ultramodern electric household appliances. Before leaving the World of Commerce and Industry, visitors would also learn of the advantages of oil and gas, air and rail transportation, aluminum, mechanized agriculture, telephony, and in the aerodynamically shaped Sermons from Science pavilion, of the relationship between scientific advancements and Christian beliefs.

Most foreign exhibits were located in the fair's northwest corner. Foreign contributors were asked to display modern industrial and commercial innovations as well as traditional handicrafts and tourist attractions. Planners also requested their exhibits tackle their vision of the future and its potential problems. Exhibit space was offered rent-free.²⁴ In the end, there was little architectural or thematic consistency, and noticeable juxtapositions arose. The Republic of China's pavilion (Taiwan), for example, highlighted traditional textiles, ceramics, and furniture design behind an ornate Asian façade while just a few feet away the Great Britain's Hall of Science and Technology featured a 150-foot wall illustrating the contributions of British engineers, astronomers, and others involved in "showing the progress of man conquering his environment."²⁵ Sweden was the only other country to have its own free-standing pavilion; the ten other countries, one city, two non-governmental organizations, and entire continent of Africa lumped together as "the African Nations," each had individual sections of long, warehouse-like buildings known as the International

Plaza assigned to them. Interestingly, as described below, three other foreign exhibits were assigned to other locations, with France located inside the World of Century 21 and Spain and a second Japanese entry somewhat inexplicably located in the more risqué Show Street section.

WORLD OF CENTURY 21

It could be argued that the Worlds of Science and of Commerce and Industry presented a more traditional world's fair message by carefully contrasting the progress of western science and technology (U.S. Science pavilion and domestic pavilions) with the charming but ultimately primitive ways of the exotic other (foreign pavilions). The mantra of progress and fulfillment of empire in earlier world's fairs has been called the "shibboleth of the industrial nations."²⁶ The World of Century 21, however, was unique in that it introduced a thread of cynicism if not downright pessimism to the overall message.

The exhibit, sponsored by the State of Washington, was housed under a single roof. The structure was designed by visionary fair architect Paul Thiry and designated to be a sports arena after the fair ended. Its signature roofline was a technological feat, utilizing "3,700 aluminum panels suspended from more than five miles of cable" to create angular, soaring spaces eleven stories tall.²⁷ Three corporations (General Motors, Pan Am, and RCA), the American Library Association, and the country of France occupied the edges around the centerpiece "World of Tomorrow" exhibit.

Of all the spaces of the Seattle World's Fair, the World of Tomorrow most openly challenged the unproblematic trajectory of science. The theme was "Century 21—the Threshold and the Threat." Visitors arrived by spherical glass elevator (the "Bubbleator") to view a twenty-one minute multimedia presentation in which images of the city of the future were interspersed with ominous scenes of atomic warfare.²⁸ The exhibit depicted the precarious balance upon which the future of humankind rested. "City Century 21" reassured fairgoers with its futuristic vision of Seattle in the year 2000: a bustling downtown core (covered by a climate-controlled dome) surrounded by rings of greenbelt, industry, and suburban-like residences. "Some of us will fly, some of us will drive our air cars, but most of us will use [...] monorail systems," the Souvenir Program informed visitors.²⁹ "The mechanics of livelihood are more complex but living itself is less complicated."³⁰ At the same time, however, fairgoers were warned that prosperity and happiness, even with all the consumer goods in the world, were not guaranteed. Slides projected onto glass blocks cut to scenes of atomic blasts and families huddled together in fall-out shelters. "The man of today must earn these rewards [...] otherwise his legacy may be one of human misery and destruction."³¹

THE (SCIENCE-FREE) WORLDS OF ART AND ENTERTAINMENT, AND THE MIDWAY

Leaving the vaguely disquieting World of Century 21, visitors could stroll through the vendors along the Boulevards of the World and either head north to the World of Art or head east to the World of Entertainment and beyond it the midway—sections of the fair

that effectively abandoned any pretense of maintaining a futuristic or scientific theme. The World of Art was housed entirely within the Fine Arts Pavilion, a new permanent exhibition hall built for the fair. Only painting and sculpture qualified as “art” and they were divided into five galleries including traditional masterpieces, modern art since 1950, art of the Ancient East, and Northwest Indian art.

All other forms of artistic endeavor, ranging from opera and ballet to waterskiing shows, international baton twirling, circus acts, and firefighting demonstrations, were located in the World of Entertainment. This area repurposed several civic buildings already owned by the city with a view toward permanent use after the fair ended. The old Civic Auditorium (1927) was converted to the Opera House, the Civic Ice Arena (1927) became the fair’s Arena, and a local high school stadium (1947) was redesigned with an outer aquatic ring for multi-purpose use at the fair. The adjacent Food Circus indoor food court occupied the former Washington National Guard Armory (1939).³²

Fairgoers who were hoping for more risqué entertainment, however, needed to leave the themed worlds of the fair and enter the greyer interstitial spaces of Century 21’s midway, the only part of the fairgrounds that was not designated a themed world. Wrapped around the eastern edge of the World of Entertainment and directly approachable from the Monorail Station, the midway may well have been the first part of Century 21 a visitor saw. The midway area consisted of the Gayway, a motley assortment of twenty different amusement rides and forty-five games of chance, and Show Street, a zone unabashedly dedicated to “adult entertainment.” The Gayway was treated as an inevitable but undesirable part of the fair by central fair planners; its design was left literally to the last minute in the hands of outside concessionaires. It ended up with a typical array of rides including roller coasters, dark rides, carousel, and a ferris wheel that was not ready by opening day.³³

Show Street was the brainchild of local entrepreneur Gracie Hansen, who declared “my mission must be to save the fair from Science” and convinced the World’s Fair Commission to allow her to offer several attractions with names like ‘Peep Backstage, USA,’ “Girls of the Galaxy,” and “A Night in Paradise.”³⁴ Robert Rydell has argued that, conservative rhetoric to the contrary, these forms of “adult entertainment” have been central to World’s Fairs from the beginning; the Seattle fair was no different.³⁵ More than once a Show Street attraction was temporarily closed down by city officials for violation of decency standards.³⁶

The explicit nature of Show Street—and the vibrant enthusiasm with which Gracie Hansen repeatedly refused to tone down her shows—made it all the more puzzling that two culturally traditional foreign exhibits were also located in this area. The Japanese Village featured what the guidebook called “an authentic replica of a Japanese temple with 24 miniature shrines” and a traditional Japanese garden.³⁷ A few feet away the Spanish Village Fiesta invited visitors to tour a replica of the birthplace of a Spanish priest who established many early missions in California.³⁸ Whether for the restorative moral calm of replica Japanese gardens and Spanish missions, or the thrill of roller coasters and striptease shows, the

Gayway and Show Street were the most popular attractions in the fair. While fewer than half of the average 50,000 daily guests might choose to visit the Science Pavilion or see City Century 21, approximately ninety percent found time to visit this zone.³⁹

THE FAIRGROUNDS SINCE 1962

In general terms, the Century 21 planners were very successful at both staging a fair and engineering a tool of longer-term urban renewal. The fair attracted 9.6 million visitors, very close to the average fair attendance of about ten million.⁴⁰ Perhaps more importantly, the Seattle fair achieved the rare honor of actually turning a profit. Final estimates suggested the fair had ended about \$1,000,000 in the black and attracted seven million out-of-state visitors who spent an additional \$320,000,000 off-site in food, lodging, transportation, and entertainment.⁴¹ “The fair,” Century 21 sponsor Seattle First National Bank concluded, “leaves the State better off than it would have been without it.”⁴²

Most would agree that the fair also left the City of Seattle better off than it would have been without it. Few publically lamented the loss of the Warren neighborhood. By contrast, the new cultural civic center was heralded as a vast improvement. Within a year, the space would be renamed Seattle Center and opened again to the public as property owned and operated by the City of Seattle. A twenty-one member advisory commission oversaw its transformation into what they openly spoke of as a Disney-esque interpretation of urban space, where buildings, landscaped gardens, restaurants, and festival space were segregated into separate zones.⁴³



Figure 5. View of former fair area left open with publically accessible landscaped areas.

The monorail would still link the site to the traditional city center one mile away, but for all intents and purposes, Seattle Center “became a beachhead for the suburbs in the central city.”⁴⁴ When it opened to the public on June 1, 1963, the new civic center featured the amenities that fair planners had envisioned nestled in their suburban setting: the Pacific Science Center, the Opera House, the Art Exhibition Hall, the Washington State Coliseum, and a 1,500-car parking garage immediately adjacent to the site. Approximately thirty percent of the 74-acre site was occupied with buildings, and the other seventy percent left open with publically accessible landscaped areas, plazas, fountains, and walkways (Fig. 5).⁴⁵ Against all recommendations, the Gayway midway zone, rechristened the Fun Forest,

also survived the transition and for the next fifty years the Ferris Wheel, Wild Mouse, and Flight to Mars took their place alongside the Opera House, Science Center, and Coliseum.

In ways that Century 21 Planners could never envision, the Seattle World's Fair set the stage for a truly visionary city of the future. There still are no flying cars, solar ovens, or self-cleaning dinner dishes on the grounds today, but in more profound ways the site has continued to be a laboratory for debates over the seeds of the future planted at the fair. In the mid-1980s when parts of Seattle Center were starting to look outdated, the City turned again to the Walt Disney Company as urban consultants. The outcome was not unproblematic. Disney recommended keeping a few iconic buildings like the Space Needle and the Science Center but bulldozing numerous beloved (if somewhat bedraggled) local favorites to be replaced by what Seattle residents complained was generic corporate urban entertainment space. Residents and local government officials alike reacted strongly to what they feared was the commodification of authentic public space, and severed their relations with Disney before any redevelopment occurred.⁴⁶

A visitor to Seattle Center today would recognize many familiar landmarks dating back half a century, from the Space Needle to the soaring arches of the Pacific Science Center and the watery spray of International Fountain. They can still, as fair planners had intended, watch a sporting event, see a play, wander through an art gallery, relax outside with a (Seattle-based) Starbucks coffee, or catch the Monorail back to the center city. They can no longer, however, ride a Ferris wheel or play a game of chance. After years of delighting small children and horrifying their parents, in 2011 the Fun Forest was dismantled for good and replaced by two new, more 'respectable' attractions with hefty entrance fees: the Experience Music Project (founded by Seattle-born Paul Allen of Microsoft fame), and the Dale Chihuly Garden and Glass Museum, in honor of the local artist. One imagines the original Century 21 designers uttering a collective sigh of relief, even as scores of Seattle Center visitors—like World's Fair guests a generation before—still thirst for urban landscapes dotted with carnivalesque adventure.

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¹²World's Fair of Science , 1958, 1-2; "First Meeting of the National Science Planning Board," 1958, 1

¹³Century 21 Exposition Development Plan," n.d., 2

¹⁴Official Guide Book," 8.

¹⁵"Century 21 Exposition General Information," n.d., 1.

¹⁶Dr. Athelstan Spilhaus, cited in "Pacific Science Center Landmark Nomination Application," 2010, 8-9

¹⁷Pacific Science Center Landmark Nomination Application," 2010, 11; "Official Guide Book," 1962, 10

¹⁸Official Guide Book," 1962, 11.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, 14.

²⁰*Ibid.*, 21.

²¹*Ibid.*, 42.

²²*Ibid.*, 45.

²³*Ibid.*, 46.

²⁴Wickwire, Cathy. 2001. "Survey Report: Comprehensive Inventory of City-Owned Resources, Seattle Washington." City of Seattle, Department of Neighborhoods, Historic Preservation Program. <http://www.seattle.gov/neighborhoods/preservation/ContextCityOwnedHistoricResourcesSurveyReport.pdf>

²⁵Official Guide Book," 70.

²⁶Alfred Heller, *World's Fairs and the End of Progress* (Corte Madera, CA: World's Fair Inc., 1999) 17; see also Robert Rydell, *World of Fairs: The Century-of-Progress Expositions* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1993).

²⁷Bill Cotter, *Seattle 1962 World's Fair* (Charleston, South Carolina: Arcadia Publishing, 2010).

²⁸"Official Guide Book," 26.

²⁹"Souvenir Program," 19.

³⁰*Ibid.*, 17.

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³⁵Rydell, 1993.

³⁶Becker, 2012.

³⁷"Official Guide Book," 111.

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³⁹Thompson, James E. to Schumacher, Frederic V. 7 July 1962, Box 15A, Ewen C. Dingwall Papers, Acc. 420, University of Washington Libraries, July 7 1962

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⁴⁶Stacy Warren, "Disneyfication of the Metropolis: Popular Resistance in Seattle," *Journal of Urban Affairs* 16 (1994): 89-107.

IMAGE CREDITS

1. Map created by author.
2. Photograph by author.
3. Image courtesy Seattle Municipal Archives, image #165724.
4. Image courtesy Seattle Municipal Archives , image #111282.
5. Photograph by author.

8.4.

A World Fair for the Future: A Study of the Legacy of the Expo '98 Urban Model

Patricia Simões Aelbrecht

The feeling of well-being cultivated in the celebrations of science, technology, culture, nation states and icons of national pride of world's fairs/ expos was often short-lived.¹ Grand plans and buildings were constructed to express these ideologies of progress. Money was never spared. Because these narratives of celebration rarely envisioned concrete urban plans for the future, however, most of them fell rapidly into decline. Most expo sites stayed undeveloped, if not abandoned, and were burdened with massive debts.² Many became relics of an event that had promised to bring a glorious future to the hosting country, reminding us of the limited long-term benefits of expo sites. Knoxville Expo 1982, New Orleans Expo 1984, and Seville Expo 1992 are good examples of this. Because of these perceived failures, for some countries such as the U.S, the once popular fair is no longer conceived as a guarantee of success or attractive to city developments.³

In this uncertain climate, the Lisbon Expo of 1998 marked a change in attitude towards the urban and architectural design of world expos, from re-cycled iconic buildings to the use of the urban plan as a trigger for urban redevelopment. Unlike most previous fairs, in which an abrupt shift from celebration to decline occurred, the Lisbon Expo continually celebrates its existence. I argue that with the design of a new neighborhood in Lisbon in the aftermath of the expo, the history of world's fairs was rewritten. Drawing on the Lisbon case in this chapter I will demonstrate that the Lisbon Expo represents a shift in attitude towards the design of world's fair's urban plans.

The Lisbon Expo plan was the first urban and architectural plan for the future effectively adopted by a world's fair. Ideologies of nation states so prominent in previous expos did not disappear, but they were placed in the background. By embracing a new model, Lisbon intended to regenerate a post-industrial site, to improve the city's relationship with the river and increase Lisbon's competitiveness within the European context. Ten years onwards the Lisbon Expo site has been acknowledged by the public as a thriving neighborhood and financial district, and it has received some scholarly attention.⁴ Interestingly, Parque Expo, the state funded development company created to design the Expo site, was invited

to provide consultancy services to Expo Shanghai 2010 and to other cities in the world.⁵ Despite the rising interest in Expo '98, little research has been done on the urban plan as a new expo model. Most of the focus has been placed on the planning lessons than on its role as an expo.⁶

This chapter critically analyzes the afterlife of the Lisbon Expo plan in two ways: first, by placing the Lisbon urban model within the history of design of world's fairs; and second, by analyzing the history of the reception of its urban plan. Methodologically, both parts are based on thorough archival research in both the archives of Parque Expo in Lisbon and the Bureau International des Expositions (BIE) in Paris, as well as on oral historical accounts with the protagonists of the urban plan before, during, and after the Expo event. Furthermore, in order to highlight the key elements of the urban plan, I do an in-depth reading of its planning and design. Not only did the Expo '98 create an important new urban model for future world's fairs, but it also contributed to debates on urban regeneration.

THE CHANGING ROLES AND MODELS OF WORLD FAIRS

Because world's fairs have always been celebrations of progress and national pride, they require their organizers not only to imagine forms of celebrating the present and the past, but also to design and construct urban and architectural models that communicated this. Over time and geography, these ideas and models changed. If during the nineteenth century world's fairs were above all displays of economic activity and products, during the twentieth century they had predominantly educational purposes, to demonstrate technological advances and artistic novelties on a worldwide scale.⁷ Although world's fairs were always a serious burden financially, creating great gaps in the city's economy, many countries kept aspiring to host them. As a result, the beginning of the twentieth century saw an uncontrolled multiplication of expos with very similar themes that were progressively emptied of their informative and cultural content. The new expo themes increasingly strengthened the fairs' trade component. It is in this historical moment that we have to see the creation of the Bureau International des Expositions (BIE) in 1928. Its aim was to control the expos' time of occurrence and to discipline their organization, function, and theme. One of the improvements the BIE undertook was the conduct of a preliminary enquiry with a focus on spatial and economic guidelines.⁸ From that moment on, every candidate country had to comply as much as possible when applying to host an exposition or have its exposition recognized.. Implicit in this enquiry was a belief that only expos that required a feasible economic model to pay for themselves and had a conscious after-use in mind could be the viable candidates.

For the BIE, the expos that marked the history of the twentieth century were the ones that had more visitors or a strong physical impact on the fair site, such as the Paris Expo 1889, the Chicago Expo 1893, the Brussels Expo 1958, and the Montreal Expo 1967. From those, only the ones that left more enduring and memorable physical testimonies, such as monuments, buildings, or public spaces, would become models for expos to follow.⁹ Paris and Brussels fit perfectly within these new ideas. They became, for the BIE, the two most

important expo models.¹⁰ It is no surprise that the Paris Expo is seen as the first expo model. It inaugurated the era of thematic exhibitions with larger cultural contents and the building of significant event heritage such as the Eiffel Tower and the Champ de Mars. Implicit in its design was a plan to build permanent event heritage. Because the expo was so centrally planned, most of the built structures in fact became part of the city's urban plan and gave birth to a tourism industry. The second expo model, that of Brussels, is very different. Created after the World War II, the primacy of the economy was dissolved to some extent in the apogee of architecture. This was manifested in the increased size and variety of exhibition pavilions, caused by the increasing number of participants and progressive diversification of national messages. Thanks to the development of concrete for building and new typologies, this was a time in which the modernist spirit embraced great architectural experiments.

After Brussels' Expo and the busy years of post-war reconstruction, stories of failures followed and the fair's legitimacy and its rhetoric of progress were questioned. This is what happened with Knoxville Expo 1982, New Orleans Expo 1984, and Seville Expo 1992. By 1988, these consecutive failures led to a new disciplinary effort on the part of the BIE, which resulted in the creation of a new category of recognized expos, alongside the universal expos.¹¹ The former would be smaller in size, shorter in duration, and more economical, with long-term aims for post-expo use. World's fairs were now expected to leave a different kind of testimony: not monuments but legacies for the future.

It is in this changing context that the Lisbon Expo of 1998 brings a new attitude to the making of world expos: from recycled iconic buildings to the use of the urban plan as catalyst of urban redevelopment. With it, I argue that a new era and a third expo model were brought forward in the urban and architectural design of world expos.

THE EXPO '98: A NEW URBAN MODEL FOR WORLD FAIRS



Figure 1. Aerial picture showing the geographical relation between the Park of the Nations, in the Northeastern side of Lisbon's harbour and the historical city center of Lisbon.

The Expo '98 brought a new reflection to the traditional formula of expos. This was visible already from its inception in its candidacy.¹² More than simply emphasizing the reuse of land or iconic buildings, as was the case in Paris and Brussels, Lisbon's candidacy envisioned a clear strategic plan with long-term aims for post-expo use. The BIE saw that this was a step in the right direction.¹³ In addition, the Lisbon Expo was the first to follow the new format of expos introduced by the BIE in 1988 to make them more economical for the hosting countries. With only 25 hectares and lasting only three months, it was smaller in size and shorter in duration.¹⁴ These three factors—post-use, size, and duration—had considerable weight in the decision of the BIE. For the candidacy of Expo '98, there was only one other candidate, Toronto, which despite having a more developed proposal than Lisbon's (it being the second time Toronto had competed), approached the expo as not more than a real estate project.¹⁵

As opposed to Toronto's proposal, the Lisbon expo plan was not yet formalized; however its objectives were clear at the international, national, and regional level. There were four main reasons that influenced the BIE in its selection of Lisbon instead of Toronto. First, it was triggered to promote the image of Lisbon and Portugal within a new global context, while at the same time intending to act as a means to regenerate an area of the city—the oriental area of Lisbon—that could contribute more decisively to transform Lisbon into a city of the XXI century.¹⁶

Second, the strength of the Expo '98's candidacy was also explained by its strong political support and the location and theme chosen.¹⁷ Its candidacy was presented to the BIE in 1989 as an initiative of the Portuguese government, and thus as a truly national project. The government formed a working group that included various ministries, namely Foreign Affairs, Commerce and Tourism, Transport and Culture, as well as representatives of the city halls of Lisbon and Loures, and consultants from various technical and architectural domains, to work on the proposal's concept and the theme.¹⁹

Third, the BIE also considered the selected location very appropriate for the event (Fig. 1). It was perceived as an area of opportunity according to the 1992 strategic plan of Lisbon.²⁰ It had great landscape value, excellent accessibility, enough space available for an event of this dimensions, and relatively little urban occupation in adjacent areas. It stretches alongside Lisbon's main river, the Tagus River, located on the periphery of Lisbon only five kilometers from Lisbon's main tourist center and under the city's main international airport. In addition, it had the necessary transport infrastructure for an event with international dimensions. It was not only well connected by a network of roads and transportation infrastructure such as rail lines and an airport, but also had the possibility to expand that infrastructure with the construction of new metro and tramlines.²¹ The location had around three hundred hectares of uninhabited land available, all of it property of the Portuguese state. The site was only partially occupied by old and derelict industrial structures, which included a gas factory, a refining plant, a slaughterhouse, a few fuel storage tanks, and storage containers from the Harbor of Lisbon, a military depot, and waste and sewage

treatment facilities. Besides those conditions, there were not any conflicts of interest that could stop the project.²² Hence, the selection of this location was seen by the organizers of the Lisbon Expo as a great opportunity to regenerate an old industrial area and reestablish urban balance in Lisbon by developing the periphery. That the site was relatively empty allowed great freedom of urban intervention.²³

The fourth reason for the success of the Lisbon proposal was the theme, “The Oceans, a Heritage for the Future,” which coincided with the five-hundred-year anniversary of Portuguese discoveries, particularly the arrival of Vasco da Gama in India, and the “Year of the Ocean” designated by the UN.²⁴ At the same time such celebratory themes made sure that memories of the dereliction of the post-industrial landscape were replaced with memories of a past glorious empire. Undeniably, Lisbon’s Expo ‘98 candidacy demonstrated to the BIE that Lisbon had a clear vision for the future.

Once Lisbon was selected by the BIE as the host country for Expo ‘98, the Portuguese government did not wait long with its planning. Immediately it formed a state funded legislative body, Parque Expo SA, that incorporated the functions of a development company to guarantee the successful continuation of the project and realization of the expo. According to its organizers, this company was necessary to complete the expo event within four years because it avoided the need for a public inquiry and could not be subject to normal legislation or supervision from City Hall.²⁵

Parque Expo formed its own team of planners and architects (led by the architect and urban planner Vassalo Rosa) to plan and execute the master plan and work out a financial model for the whole event. Expo Vancouver ‘86, Expo Brisbane ‘88 and Expo Seville ‘92 and the 1992 Olympic city Barcelona were selected as urban models.²⁶ From these exemplars they took several important lessons for their own urban model. From Expo Vancouver and Brisbane, they learned that temporary buildings with modular designs can be easily sold, and constructed, deconstructed, and reassembled at new sites to accommodate new needs. Ironically enough, from Seville they learned what not to do. An expo site cannot be developed as mono-functional if it wants to create any afterlife. From Barcelona, they concluded that the quality of the urban design plays an important role for a successful urban renewal.²⁷ Out of these lessons they were able to formulate a plan consisting of three strategies (Table 1): (1) at the planning level, i.e., the broad urban context; (2) at the design level, i.e., the expo’s public spaces and architecture; and (3) at the economic level, with a robust financial plan.²⁸ Underlying these strategies was the initial goal set in the candidacy to incorporate a post-expo, i.e., to design an urban plan that could encompass two phases in the Expo development. A first phase was designed to guarantee the successful realization of the actual Expo and its goals; a second phase was planned to revise and extend the initial urban plan of the Expo event in order to construct a neighborhood (Fig. 2).²⁹

STRATEGIES OF THE EXPO '98 PROJECT		
(1) Planning Level	(2) Design Level	(3) Development, Management and Financial level
<p><u>2 in 1 plan:</u> Expo and Post-Expo. <u>1st objective:</u> plan Integrated in the 1992 strategic plan of Lisbon <u>2nd objective:</u> first: the creation of a center; second: an expo. <u>Planning principles:</u> -inclusion of Mixed-use (housing, services and commerce) -provision of economic anchors -improvement of strategic infrastructure.</p>	<p><u>Architecture:</u> with re-use in mind; provision of both temporary and permanent structures. <u>Urban design:</u> with permanence and functionality in mind; designing public spaces with double function: for event and post-event.</p>	<p><u>Developing/ managing model:</u> creation of an private company 'Parque Expo' with access to public capital which was given the duty of designing, developing, constructing and dismantling the World Exhibition, but also of buying, developing and selling land in the whole zone! <u>Financial model:</u> pay the development with the selling of land and pavilions to private investors and developers after the closure of the event.</p>

Table 1. Strategies for Planning, Designing and Financing the Expo' 98 Project

Hence, at the planning level, one of the first objectives was to ensure that the plan fit the 1992 approved strategic plan for Lisbon that defined the directions of urban development. The second objective, following the model of the Olympics in Barcelona, was to think of the project primarily as the creation of a new center in Lisbon, and only secondarily as an expo.³⁰ These objectives clearly emphasized the importance of a coherent town-planning framework in which two principles were employed.³¹

The first principle was to improve the transportation infrastructure to increase accessibility. This included the expansion of the international airport; the building of new national and international roads, in particular to Spain; construction of a second bridge to link the center with the southern riverbank; and the creation of more public transport links. All these projects were already included in the strategic plan because they were seen as necessary to the growth and survival of the city.³² The Expo was thus seen an opportunity to implement them.

The second principle underlying the plan to create a new center was to help in structuring the economic and social fabrics.³³ This implied a mixed-use plan and the provision of post-event economic anchors of development. Accordingly, the future center of the new neighborhood balanced a mix of urban facilities for commercial, business, leisure, and cultural activities, while the rest of the plan, namely the two areas surrounding the Expo site to the north and south, would be filled mainly with residential areas.³⁴ The anchors provided included an intermodal station with trains, buses, and metro, a Lisbon exhibition center, an Oceanarium, a multifunctional pavilion, a variety of public spaces and parks, and other relevant amenities such as a hospital and a university. The inclusion of mixed uses and, in particular, housing was a lesson taken from the failure of Seville.³⁵

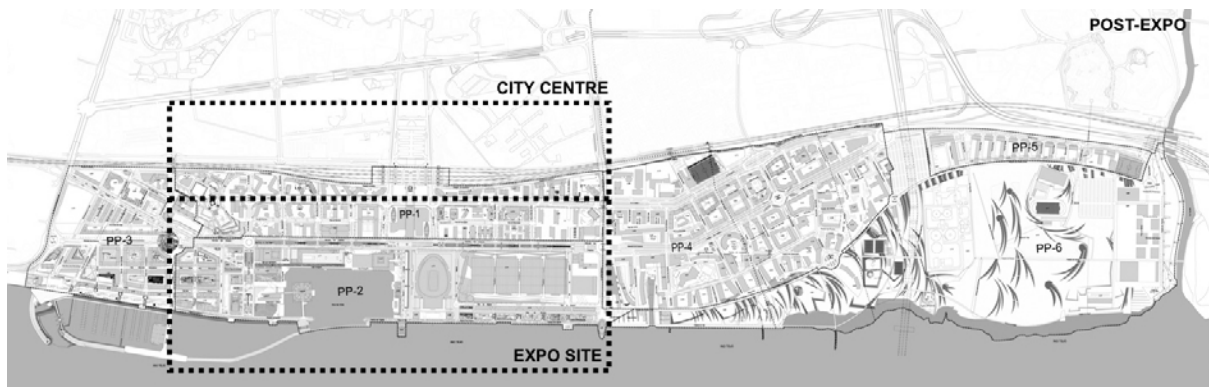


Figure 2. The two phases of the urban plan: the Expo and Post-Expo Plan of Lisbon Expo '98 (diagramming by the author).

At the design level, the main aim of Parque Expo was to guarantee extended use of the site and remembrance of the Expo event in the new neighborhood. This implied a strong design rationale for its architecture and public space. For the architecture, designers envisioned the re-use of buildings through the provision of permanent and temporary constructions, continuing the tradition of previous expos (Fig. 3).³⁶

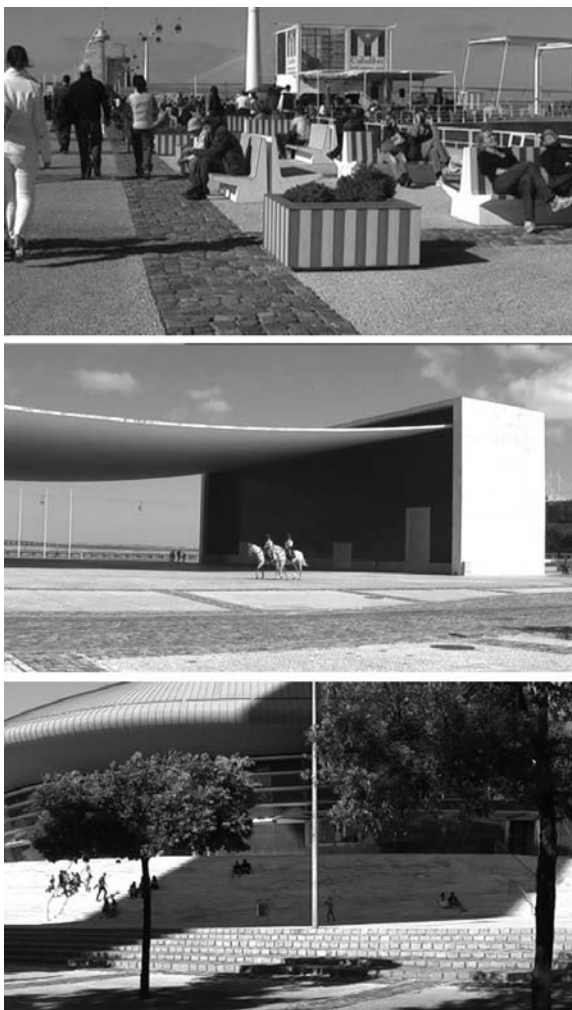


Figure 3. Temporary Information Pavilion converted into a bar (top), Portugal pavilion (middle), Atlantico pavilion (bottom).

The temporary constructions were explicitly meant to allow enough flexibility to fulfill the different needs of the participant countries and quick dismantling after the Expo closure. These included pavilions with modular structures (the module basis was 256 square meters or 16x16 meters) and other installations for restaurants, kiosks, and some information pavilions. Some of these pavilions of modular structure were conceived with a double function in mind. This was a lesson taken from Brisbane and Vancouver.³⁷

The permanent structures, on the contrary, served to preserve the memory of the event. They included public spaces and various iconic buildings such as the Portuguese pavilion, which was converted after the Expo into an exhibition space, and other thematic pavilions such as the pavilion of “knowledge of the seas,” which was adapted into a museum of science, or the Atlantico pavilion which became an important concert venue.

There is no doubt that the architecture was an important factor in guaranteeing the post-expo use. This was already a known fact from previous expo events, as in the Paris model. In the Lisbon model, during the development of the project it became clear that the success of the urban plan depends more on the effectiveness of the urban design to transform the expo into a neighborhood.³⁸ Therefore it can be argued that the public spaces were designed to become the permanent framework of the future neighborhood. The public spaces had implicit in their design a double function. On the one hand, they followed the strict requirements of the Expo's plans: namely, to offer great comfort and accessibility for the expected nine million visitors and to have a festive and ephemeral character. On the other hand, they designed a plan that made it possible to be used immediately after the closure of the event. As such, it was necessary to provide not only a great variety of public spaces that would keep alive the memory of the event but also to achieve some urban clarity and unity, rather than create a permanent exhibition.³⁹ Hence for purposes of the event, a diverse and dense landscape of public spaces was created, incorporating references to different themes with different temporal, functional, cultural, and typological origins (medieval, classical, and modern). The result was a variety of public spaces in terms of form—enclosed, covered, enclosed but open to the sky, or simply open—and with varied materials such as traditional Portuguese stone, wood and grass (Fig. 4).⁴⁰



Figure 4. The three most emblematic public spaces of the Expo '98 plan: the main square 'Rossio dos Olivais' (top), the riverfront (middle), the Boulevard *Alameda dos Oceanos* (bottom).

As explained by Vassalo Rosa, the project leader of the plan, for the purpose of the post-event use of the public spaces, three fundamental aspects were taken into account: the legibility of the urban spaces, a physical relationship with the river, and a positive integration with the surrounding and existing urban fabric.⁴¹

In order to ensure good legibility among the public spaces, the designers organized the public spaces along four axes, as shown in Fig. 5: (1) a public axis perpendicular to the river that aggregates the main public activities (station, shopping center, main square *Rossio dos Olivais*); (2) a main accessibility axis (the Avenue *D. Joao II*), the only road for heavy traffic linking the PN with the city and adjacent areas; (3) a leisure axis fully pedestrianized that stretches along the whole riverfront; and (4) a secondary accessibility axis with conditioned traffic (a boulevard with trees,

the *Alameda dos Oceanos*) that works as the spine of the neighborhood connecting the three neighborhood areas (the southern residential area, the central public area, and the north residential area).

The relationship with the river was reinforced by transforming the riverfront into a ludic area fully pedestrianized and by guaranteeing a gradation of construction density from high to low—from west to east—to the river. To integrate the plan with the surroundings, the main public buildings were located on the periphery of the site.⁴²

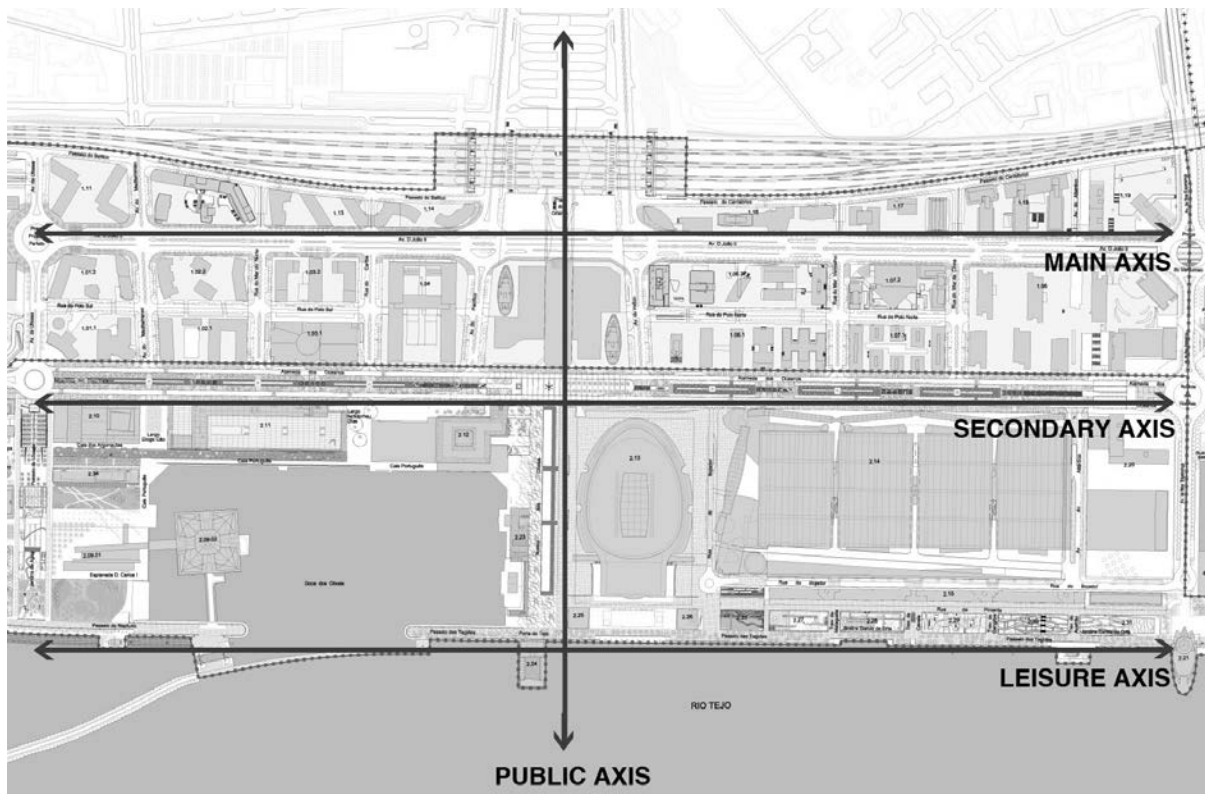


Figure 5. The four organizing axis of the Expo '98 plan (diagramming by the author).

Parallel to the planning and urban design of the urban plan, the Parque Expo also devised a financial plan, which could guarantee the successful realization of the event and completion of the urban development.⁴³ The initial intention was to have zero cost. The Expo planners expected that in twenty years they would be able to pay back monies committed to the event's development with the selling of land and pavilions to private investors and developers. In reality, as is usually the case, they had more costs for the whole development than they had predicted.⁴⁴ Nevertheless, the realization of the expo was mostly paid for.⁴⁵

As shown, the Expo '98 marks a radical transformation in the philosophy and mode of operation of world's fairs. It was the first to combine a clear strategy in terms of town planning, urban design, and architecture with a bold financial model.⁴⁶ It was soon recognized as a third model in the design of world expos: the expo as catalyst of urban renewal.⁴⁷ The BIE strongly advised subsequent Expos to use it as a base for urban development, and furthermore, to visit the site to experience it first hand.

THE RECEPTION OF THE MODEL AND ITS LEGACY

Despite the successes described above, some doubts have been raised about the Lisbon Expo's effectiveness. After thirteen years the Lisbon Expo continues to celebrate its existence. Today it is a thriving residential neighborhood and successful commercial, leisure, and business center.⁴⁸ This success is often presented in terms of numbers: 1247 million square meters of housing, 626 million of offices, 190 million of commerce, and 364 million of other collective functions; a total of 19 thousand inhabitants (which is estimated to reach an eventual 30 thousand), a floating population of 50 thousand workers on weekdays, and 250 thousand visitors per week.⁴⁹ As the president of neighborhood association said, 'it has almost the population of a city, some cities in Portugal do not have even this amount of population'.⁵⁰

Several reports and surveys made by the Parque Expo about Expo Lisbon reveal that residents, workers, and visitors are in general very satisfied with the urban development, in particular with the variety and quality of design of the public spaces and public art. Some suggest that the newly created neighborhood, now called Park of the Nations, offers the public spaces that Lisbon does not have. The few people who dislike it are often those nostalgic for the traditional city and who have great prejudice against new and modern developments.⁵¹

The Expo '98 success went beyond everyone's expectations, even those of its mentors and designers.⁵² Vassalo Rosa, the project leader of the plan, recognized that other similar developments take at least ten years to build and another twenty to become a lively neighborhood. Ten to twenty years is normally the time needed for a master-planned neighborhood to take roots and become a community.⁵³

However, although the Expo plan has been a success, its recognition as an urban model has been slow. Despite scholarly attention at conferences and in the literature of urban studies, and publicity in the consultations to cities all over the world which Parque Expo has provided, the model has not yet been adopted many times in practice. If Shanghai has attentively followed Lisbon's steps, the same was not true of Hannover (which adopted only its financial model), Zaragoza, and Aichi, and other later expos.⁵⁴ The reception of the model needs thus further scrutiny.

Several explanations can be given as to why Expo '98 has not been fully embraced as a successful expo model. The first is that Expo '98 was never a financial success. Although it paid off most of the event, a 1997 audit found that the Expo had a loss of 0.09 million euros.⁵⁵ This was known only two years after the event, which was the only moment at which the accounting was made public. Although financial loss was not expected, we cannot forget that all world's fairs have been "financial failures, though some are more creative in their accounting than others."⁵⁶

The second explanation is related to Expo '98's neoliberal planning approach, namely its search for growth, competitiveness and a regime of exception outside the statutory planning policies, which caused intended and unintended socio-spatial outcomes.⁵⁷ One very visible spatial outcome is the separation of the new neighborhood from the surrounding urban fabric. This is seen as a failure of the urban planning to articulate the new neighborhood in relation to the adjacent residential neighborhoods to the west.⁵⁸ Instead of working out the relationship between the new and old neighborhoods, the plan may be interpreted as accentuating their division by placing the railway line in between them (despite the creation of nine passages under it) and leaving all zones in between undefined. As a result, the railway line is perceived as a symbolic barrier for the inhabitants of both sides. Although it remains unclear whether this spatial outcome was intended or not, it is well known now that, from the outset of the project, this in-between zone was difficult to integrate because of the negative connotations attaching to social housing in the neighborhoods to the west.⁵⁹

Together with the barriers to the Westside, the most criticized social outcome is the fact that the Park of the Nations has become a homogeneously middle and upper class income neighborhood. For some critics, this was an expected effect of the financial model adopted from the outset to develop a self-sustained zero-cost Expo.⁶⁰ For them, the plan was designed to obtain maximum profit from the market estate through the increase of land values and a property boom, instead of aiming to solve the needs of the area. This became even clearer in the post-Expo stage, where much emphasis was placed on making the neighborhood a new center in Lisbon, turning it into one of the most expensive areas in the city, with housing only for the affluent. This led some critics to say that it was becoming a kind of luxurious and solitary ghetto.⁶¹

Not all the outcomes have been perceived as negative, in particular in dealing with its urban design and architecture. The director of the BIE considered Expo '98 the most beautiful event ever, praising the high quality of its public spaces and pavilions.⁶² Since then, the acknowledgments of its urban plan have continued. Many of its pavilions and public spaces won architecture prizes both nationally and internationally.⁶³ At the national level, according to Mega Ferreira, one of the Expo's mentors, it established a new pattern of urban quality for Lisbon and Portugal in general.⁶⁴ Many cities, in particular middle-sized ones, now wish to have public spaces, urban furniture, and parks like those of Expo '98. This sudden interest in public space has led to the creation of an urban regeneration program 'Polis' in twenty-eight cities⁶⁵ in Portugal, ten of which were assigned to Parque Expo.⁶⁶ Since then the Parque Expo has become a proclaimed urban consultancy company selling advice to cities all over the world such as Chicomba in Angola, Recife in Brasil, Praia in Cape Verde, and Cairo in Egypt, just to mention a few, and of course to international exhibitions such as those at Shanghai, Hannover, and Zaragoza. Among these expos, it can be argued that Shanghai followed the Lisbon model most closely. From the beginning of its candidacy, Shanghai's organizers asked advice from Parque Expo and they visited Lisbon several times.⁶⁷ In the expos of Hannover and Zaragoza, the Parque Expo had a more minor role, influencing only their financial model and building the Portuguese pavilion at both.

As with Expo '98, the planning of Shanghai Expo 2010 also began with “after use”, “permanent,” and “functional” thinking in order to minimize the costs and the wasteful use of land sources, and to build the infrastructure that the city did not have. The strategy also had a dual role, which was formalized in a “two in one” plan: to organize and build an expo, while also fulfilling the requirements of the city’s masterplan.⁶⁸ As a matter of fact, Expo 2010 was seen as the implementation of the strategic plan of the city.⁶⁹ The result was the selection of a site that could help to revitalize two inner city post-industrial riverbanks and the inclusion of cultural amenities as after uses. However, unlike the Lisbon Expo plan, housing was not included at Shanghai. Despite recognition of the importance of including it, this decision was justified by Shanghai officials as following the city’s master plan with its dominant cultural focus.⁷⁰ The future will tell whether this was a good decision.

Parallel to this interest, the Expo '98 plan has gained international momentum at several conferences. From 1998 to 2005, ten symposia were organized by the BIE to discuss the role of “International exhibitions as catalysts of development” (1998), the “Legacy of International exhibitions” (2000), and the “long-lasting effects of ephemeral events,” just to mention a few. In 2008, together with the Portuguese Order of Architects, Parque Expo organized a conference in 2008 on the ten-year anniversary of Expo '98’s city/ imagined-city, inviting the architects involved and Portuguese scholars to discuss the project. Since the Shanghai Expo in 2010, a cycle of conferences on “Best Urban Practices” has been regularly taking place, sponsored by the BIE.⁷¹ Most recently, in 2011, the Global City Conference in Abu Dhabi had a panel about “How to Maximize Benefits from Mega Events”.⁷²

In all these conferences it has been increasingly recognized that “expos can contribute to create better cities” and can leave larger legacies than other mega events like sporting events.⁷³ Two reasons have often been brought forward. The first is that expos are inherently place-making and place-marketing enterprises, because they exist and communicate through the medium of buildings, objects, and displays. The second is that expos can use their themes to pursue ideas, visions, meanings, and practices and pull them together to spur urban development and regeneration. In Expo Lisbon the idea of celebrating the five hundred years of discoveries effectively supported its post-use. It replaced memories of dereliction and disuse of the eastern part of the city by national pride and hope, and it created a thriving community.⁷⁴

Although success can be evaluated in many ways, two lessons are particularly relevant for the planning and designing of future expos, and urban regeneration projects. The first is to select a location clearly integrated into the strategic plan of a city. This implies clear objectives at the international, national, and regional levels. With the Lisbon case, it was seen that the selected location not only had the necessary resources and attractiveness for an event of international dimensions—accessibility, availability of space, landscape value, and possibility for urban intervention—but also was considered an area of opportunity to regenerate a post-industrial wasteland, rebalance the city’s growth and local economy, and enhance the city’s image. The location has thus an important weight in achieving all these objectives.

The second is to think from the beginning of the post-use. As seen with Expo '98, this implies a coherent town planning framework, and a clear strategy for long-term aims. The plan must include a fine-grained mixed-use plan of housing, services, and commerce, to guarantee population presence and to be economically viable. The architecture has to be conceived with an idea of reuse and the urban design with an idea of permanence. In Expo '98, many buildings were either temporary, to be quickly dismantled, or permanent to be reused. The public spaces were designed from the outset with a definite double function, which enabled them to act as both event spaces and ordinary public spaces. Of course the success of these strategies, as was seen with Expo '98, also depends on the financial model and on the administrative capacity and continuity in carrying out the post-use.

¹Robert W. Rydell, *World of Fairs: The Century-Of-Progress Expositions* (University of Chicago Press, 1993), 1-14.

²Ibid., 5.

³Marc I. Wilson and Laura Huntoon, "world's fairs and Urban Development: Lisbon and Expo '98," in *International Urban Planning Settings: Lessons of Success*, vol. 12, *International Review of Comparative Public Policy* (Oxford, UK: JAI, Elsevier Science, Ltd, 2001), 374-375; Gordon Linden and Paul Creighton, "Expo Article," in *Expo Exchange* (Urban land Institute, 2000).

⁴Since 1998 that many conferences have been organized to discuss the Expo '98.

⁵"Interview Between Author and Vincent LosCertaes, Secretary General of BIE", January 10, 2012; "Interview Between Author and Aquilino Machado, Geographer at Parque Expo, S.A", December 28, 2011.

⁶Erik Swyngedouw, Frank Moulaert, and Arantxa Rodriguez, "Neoliberal Urbanization in Europe: Large-Scale Urban Development Projects and the New Urban Policy," *Antipode* 34, no. 3 (December 16, 2002): 542-577; Jean-Paul Carrière and Christophe Demazière, "Urban Planning and Flagship Development Projects: Lessons from EXPO '98, Lisbon," *Planning Practice and Research* 17, no. 1 (2002): 69-79.

⁷Rydell, *World of Fairs*, 15-37.

⁸BIE, *Preliminary Enquiry for BIE Registration or Recognition of International Exhibitions* (Paris, version), 1988 (ammendment 1928).

⁹"Interview Between Author and Vincent LosCertaes, Secretary General of BIE."

¹⁰Antonio Mega Ferreira, "Expo '98: 2000 Days to Invent the Future," *Oceanus*, July 1992.

¹¹*Documentos Para a História Da Expo '98: 1989-1992*, Parque Expo '98. (Lisbon: Parque Expo S.A., 1999), 30.

¹²"Portugal's Reply to Preliminary Enquiry for BIE Registration or Recognition of International Exhibitions (7 October, 1991)," in *Documentos Para a História Da Expo '98: 1989-1992*, Parque Expo '98. (Lisbon: Parque Expo S.A., 1999), 160-161.

¹³"Interview Between Author and Vincent LosCertaes, Secretary General of BIE."

¹⁴In 1988, the BIE decided to introduce a new category of Expos smaller in size - with a maximum 25 hectares - and duration - between three weeks and three months, to add to the usual category

that has the duration between 6 weeks and 6 months; and to substitute the labels of 'Universal' and 'International' for 'Registered' and 'Recognized' (meaning officially recognized by the hosting country).

¹⁵"Interview Between Author and Vincent LosCertaes, Secretary General of BIE."

¹⁶"Portugal's Reply to Preliminary Enquiry for BIE Registration or Recognition of International Exhibitions (7 October, 1991)," 160.

¹⁷"Interview Between Author and Vincent LosCertaes, Secretary General of BIE"; *Reply of Portugal to the BIE Inquiry*, October 7, 1991, 30.

¹⁸"Portugal's Reply to Preliminary Enquiry for BIE Registration or Recognition of International Exhibitions (7 October, 1991)," 162.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, 173.

²⁰"Interview Between Author and Vincent LosCertaes, Secretary General of BIE."

²¹"Portugal's Reply to Preliminary Enquiry for BIE Registration or Recognition of International Exhibitions (7 October, 1991)," 178.

²²*Ibid.*, 181; Hedwig Heeren, "Expo '98: An Ambitious Goal," *The Anglo-Portuguese News* (Lisbon, May 2, 1991).

²³"Interview Between Renzo Lecardame and Architect Manuel Salgado, Published in Newspaper Publico", April 12, 2002.

²⁴"Portugal's Reply to Preliminary Enquiry for BIE Registration or Recognition of International Exhibitions (7 October, 1991)," 165.

²⁵*Ibid.*, 173.

²⁶"Correspondence Between Mega Ferreira (menthor Expo' 98) and Vincent LosCertaes Secretary General of BIE", January 20, 1994.

²⁷"Interview Between Renzo Lecardame and Architect Manuel Salgado, Published in Newspaper Publico."

²⁸*Parque Expo's Mission/ La Mission De Parque Expo* (Archives BIE, 1992).

²⁹"Interview between author and project leader of Expo and Post-Expo Plan (architect and planner Joao Vassalo Rosa)", April 13, 2010.

³⁰"Interview Between Renzo Lecardame and Architect Manuel Salgado, Published in Newspaper Publico."

³¹*Parque Expo's Mission/ La Mission De Parque Expo*.

³²*Documentos Para a História Da Expo '98: 1989-1992*, Parque Expo '98. (Lisbon: Parque Expo S.A., 1999), 260-261.

³³"Interview between author and project leader of Expo and Post-Expo Plan (architect and planner Joao Vassalo Rosa)."

³⁴"Portugal's Reply to Preliminary Enquiry for BIE Registration or Recognition of International Exhibitions (7 October, 1991)," 181.

³⁵"Interview between author and project leader of Expo and Post-Expo Plan (architect and planner Joao Vassalo Rosa)."

³⁶"Portugal's Reply to Preliminary Enquiry for BIE Registration or Recognition of International Exhibitions (7 October, 1991)," 183.

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸“Interview Between Renzo Lecardame and Architect Manuel Salgado, Published in Newspaper Publico”; “Interview between author and project leader of Expo and Post-Expo Plan (architect and planner Joao Vassalo Rosa).”

³⁹“Interview between author and project leader of Expo and Post-Expo Plan (architect and planner Joao Vassalo Rosa).”

⁴⁰José M. Fernandes, *7 Anos De Lisboa: 1997-2004 (arquitectura, Património, Urbanismo, Polémicas)*, Cidade De Lisboa 40 (Lisboa: Livros Horizonte, 2005).

⁴¹“Interview between author and project leader of Expo and Post-Expo Plan (architect and planner Joao Vassalo Rosa).”

⁴²“Interview between author and project leader of Expo and Post-Expo Plan (architect and planner Joao Vassalo Rosa)”, April 13, 2010.

⁴³“Interview Between Author and Aquilino Machado, Geographer at Parque Expo, S.A.”

⁴⁴Alexandra Castro, Joana Lucas, and Vitor Matias Ferreira, “A ‘Engenharia’ Financeira e as Variacoes Orcamentais Da Expo ‘98’,” *Sociologia - Problemas e Praticas* 24 (1997): 211-230.

⁴⁵“Interview Between Author and Aquilino Machado, Geographer at Parque Expo, S.A.”

⁴⁶Swyngedouw, Moulaert, and Rodriguez, “Neoliberal Urbanization in Europe,” 77.

⁴⁷“Interview Between Author and Vincent LosCertaes, Secretary General of BIE.”

⁴⁸“Interview Between Author and Editor of Local Newspaper ‘Noticias Do Parque’ (Miguel Menezes)”, April 9, 2010.

⁴⁹*Percepcao Da Qualidade De Vida Do Parque Das Nacoes* (Lisbon: Parque Expo S.A., 2008), 4.

⁵⁰“Interview Between Author and President of Neighborhood Association of the PN (José Moreno, R10/W8)”, April 15, 2010.

⁵¹“Interview Between Author and Editor of Local Newspaper ‘Noticias Do Parque’ (Miguel Menezes).”

⁵²Mega Ferreira, A. (2008), ‘Context of Expo’ 98’, lecture at the *Seminar of 10 years of Expo’ 98: city imagined/ city built*, 7-8 November 2008, Portugal Pavilion, Park of the Nations, Lisbon (DVD format) [Mega Ferreira, A. (2008), ‘Contexto da Expo’ 98’, *Seminário 10 anos da Expo’ 98: Cidade imaginada/ cidade concretizada*, 7-8 Novembro 2008, Pavilhão de Portugal, Parque das Nações, Lisboa (formato DVD)].

⁵³“Interview between author and project leader of Expo and Post-Expo Plan (architect and planner Joao Vassalo Rosa)”, April 13, 2010.

⁵⁴“Interview Between Author and Aquilino Machado, Geographer at Parque Expo, S.A”, December 28, 2011.

⁵⁵Alexandra Castro, Joana Lucas, and Vitor Matias Ferreira, “A ‘Engenharia’ Financeira e as Variacoes Orcamentais Da Expo ‘98’,” *Sociologia - Problemas e Praticas* 24 (1997): 228.

⁵⁶Robert W. Rydell, *World of Fairs: The Century-Of-Progress Expositions* (University of Chicago Press, 1993), 5.

⁵⁷Erik Swyngedouw, Frank Moulaert, and Arantxa Rodriguez, “Neoliberal Urbanization in Europe: Large-Scale Urban Development Projects and the New Urban Policy,” *Antipode* 34, no. 3 (December 16, 2002): 576-579.

⁵⁸Jean-Paul Carrière and Christophe Demazière, "Urban Planning and Flagship Development Projects: Lessons from EXPO '98, Lisbon," *Planning Practice and Research* 17, no. 1 (2002): 76.

⁵⁹Ibid; 76; José M. Fernandes, *7 Anos De Lisboa: 1997-2004* (arquitectura, Património, Urbanismo, Polémicas), Cidade De Lisboa 40 (Lisboa: Livros Horizonte, 2005).

⁶⁰"Interview Between Author and Aquilino Machado, Geographer at Parque Expo, S.A."

⁶¹Manuel Graca Dias, "Parque Das Nacoes," <http://parquedasnacoes.blogspot.com>, *Parque Das Nações: Notícias, Opinião, Fotografia*, 2007.

⁶²"Expo '98 De Alto Nivel Conceptual e Estetico: Ole Simpson Deu Nota Elevada a Exposicao Mundial De Lisboa," *Publico* (Lisbon, 1998).

⁶³The Prizes include: 2004 Prize Publituris for the 'Best Congress Space' for the Atlantico Pavilion; 2003 Prize Order of Engineers 'As one of the most Remarkable National Works' for the Urban Park and Gare do Oriente station; 2001 Gold medal from the International Committee and International Association of Sports and Leisure Equipement; 1999 Prize for the best Urban Project in the Iberian Peninsula; 1998 several Prizes Valmor for the Portugal Pavilion, Aquarium 'Oceanario de Lisboa' and Atlantico Pavilion (a distinguished Portuguese Prize for Architecture); among many others.

⁶⁴Graca Dias, "Parque Das Nacoes."

⁶⁵The ten Cities part of the Portuguese Polis programme include: Agualva-Cacém, Albufeira, Castelo Branco, Coimbra, Costa da Caparica, Leiria, Matosinhos, Viana do Castelo, Vila Nova de Gaia and Viseu.

⁶⁶*Portugal Politica De Cidades Polis XXI 2207-2013* (Ministerio do Ambiente, do Ordenamento do Territorio e do Desenvolvimento Regional, Gabinete do Secretario de Estado do Ordenamento do Territorio e das Cidades, 2008).

⁶⁷"Interview Between Author and Vincent LosCertaes, Secretary General of BIE"; "Interview Between Author and Aquilino Machado, Geographer at Parque Expo, S.A."

⁶⁸Lucille Lok Sze Leung, "World Exposition (EXPO) and Sustainable World City Development: a Case Study of Shanghai EXPO 2010" (Master of Sciences (Urban Planning), The Centre of Urban Planning & Environmental Management The University of Hong Kong, 2008), 50-67.

⁶⁹Citing Professor Wu, Z. Q. (2008, March 5, 2008), "Planning and Design of Expo 2010 Shanghai, China", EXPO 2010 Joint Architectural Design Conference, Shanghai (Leung, "World Exposition (EXPO) and Sustainable World City Development: a Case Study of Shanghai EXPO 2010.", 89)

⁷⁰"Interview Between Author and Vincent LosCertaes, Secretary General of BIE."

⁷¹"Urban Best Practices Area" (UBPA) available at: <http://www.bie-paris.org/site/en/Shanghai%202010/upba/135-urban-best-practices-area-ubpa.html> (accessed 10 January, 2012).

⁷²"Global City 2011 Conference: How to Maximize Benefits from Mega Events", available at: <http://www.bie-paris.org/site/en/articles/general-news/398-global-city-2011-conference.html>, (accessed 10 January, 2012).

⁷³Vincent LosCertaes, "How to Maximize Benefits from Mega Events" (presented at the Global City 2011 Conference, Abu Dhabi, 2011); Kang, Director of the Seoul History Museum, and master planner for the 1980 Seoul Olympic Park., "How to Maximize Benefits from Mega Events" (presented at the Global City 2011 Conference, Abu Dhabi, 2011).

⁷⁴"Interview Between Author and President of Neighborhood Association of the PN (José Moreno)", April 15, 2010.

IMAGE CREDITS

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8.5.

Flying to the World of Tomorrow: The Ascension Theme at the 1939 New York World's Fair

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The Austrian-born graphic artist Joseph Binder's winning entry in the poster competition for the 1939 New York World's Fair shines a spotlight on the fair organizers' proclivity to imagine the future with what could be called an ascensional spirit.¹ With sparkling graphic lines, Binder reinforced the vertical thrust of the fair's iconic 700-foot Trylon by a synchronized squadron of nine airplanes, ascending to a new stratospheric frontier (Fig. 1). The rhetorical positioning of the airplanes in the poster seems to represent the flying machines as the pinnacle of an evolution in transportation technologies. The message is that airplanes would be not only much faster and unperturbed by the fragility of geographic terrains, therefore, more convenient than earthbound modes of transportation, but also a most efficient vehicle to an ideal future. The patterned skyline of New York City, composed at the foot of Trylon, appears to be the urban alter ego of the airplane. The fact that Binder's poster was used on the cover of the *First Edition Official Guide Book* of the fair alludes to the extent to which the fair organizers subscribed to a buoyant World of Tomorrow.



Figure 1. Joseph Binder's winning entry in the poster competition for the 1939 New York World's Fair.

If “Building the World of Tomorrow” was the official dream of the 1939 New York World's Fair, then that dream was ubiquitously symbolized at the fairground by various allegories of flight, winged figures, and aerial perspectives.² The Fair's two most popular exhibits—General Motors' Futurama in the Transportation Zone and Democracy inside the Fair's symbolic gypsum-clad white globe called Perisphere—attracted fairgoers to gaze into the World of Tomorrow from the aviator's privileged vantage in the sky. As if to recapture the arch-provocateur Le Corbusier's celebration of the airplane cockpit as the Master Planner's pulpit from

which to reshape the world, the fairground itself became the object of highly idealized perspective from what an official brochure called “the airplane view.”³ An example is found in the 1939 Fair’s official guidebook. The illustrator Harry M. Petit, well known for his futuristic, airship-filled “Dream of New York” published by Moses King in 1908, used his aerial drawing of the fairground (Fig. 2) to highlight the principles of modern master planning.⁴ Petit’s aerial gaze had already been prefigured on a different occasion prior to the inauguration of the 1939 Fair. A photograph in which New York City Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia inspects a model of the 1939 World’s Fair at Marshall Field in Chicago, in October 1938, during a national tour promoting the fair, offers a testament to the cavalier ways that the fair organizers envisioned the transformation of marshlands and dumping grounds of Flushing into a planned park that itself would thematically represent America as a progressive utopia.⁵ If the world’s fairs were enclosed zones of lofty ideals, as Burton Benedict argues, then LaGuardia’s complacent gaze endorsed those ideals, while also mirroring them by the top-down authority he could exercise over the master plan of the fair.⁶



Figure 2. Harry M. Petit’s aerial drawing of the fairground.

The interwar period was the heyday of technological utopianism and, in particular, aviation that many believed would usher in a new world of faster mobility, easier connectivity, and, more generally, a cultural transformation.⁷ Furthermore, airplanes would empower humanity with a new mode of seeing the world from hitherto unattained heights, an optical advantage that would in turn facilitate the creation of planned cities of efficiency, order, and progress. Such ebullient interpretations of human flight had an enduring effect on the aesthetic perceptions of interwar visual culture. As one of the culminating events of the interwar period, the 1939 New York World’s Fair reflected the spirit of this visual culture with

extravagant showmanship. I propose that an ascensional attitude, so to speak, permeated the 1939 fair's architecture, sculpture and mural programs, films, official posters, guidebooks, and paraphernalia. Moreover, the 1939 fair marked the final burst of a visual culture—one in which advanced technologies such as aviation provoked many utopian visions laced with consumerist mantras, thanks to robust corporate patronage—before World War II.⁸ The fair provided a most ostentatious case study to probe the aesthetic effects of human flight that arguably buttressed the ideological foundation of a host of exhibits. Examining the 1939 fair from this vantage point offers new insights into the tenacious nature of technological utopianism even in the final years of the Depression Decade, as well as the intellectual fertility of an ascensional mindset to showcase the so-called World of Tomorrow with abandon in front of an anxious nation.

One of the three films that debuted at the fair—the American Institute of Planners' *The City* (1939), scripted by Lewis Mumford and directed by Ralph Steiner and Willard Van Dyke—is a prime example of how human flight affected the American body politic.⁹ The documentary was idealistic, framed with a Ruskinian tragic view of technological modernity in which the early 20th-century industrial city became a wasteland of dehumanizing machines, environmental pollution, and anonymous masses. Critics interpreted the film as a panacea for the unhygienic growth of the modern city, as well as the small but influential Regional Plan Association of America's promotion of a pastoralist greenbelt idea.¹⁰ The good life could be ensured not by wholesale mechanization, automobiles, and sprawling infrastructures, but by restoring to modern city life a semblance of healthy living and social wellbeing associated with Ebenezer Howard-style community-based garden cities.

Unquestioned submission to technology was dehumanizing, yet the documentary also revealed a peculiar affinity for the opposite view. The Mumfordian city's Puritanist nostalgia for the countryside and its purported goodness due to its congruity to nature could only be intelligible to the synoptic God's-eye view that an airplane could provide. Toward the middle of the documentary, in a section called "Science Takes Flight," a shimmering DC-3 airplane takes the audience along on a 2.54-minute aerial ride to see the bounties of living harmoniously with nature, away from the chaos and pollution of the existing machine city. But the camera is not always inside the airplane, peeking through the window; rather, it is often above it, granting heroic views of both the airplane itself and the fleeting greenbelt urban model below. The view is complemented by the narrator Morris Carnovsky's assured voice (and Aaron Copland's background music): "This new age builds a better kind of city, close to the soil once more. As molded to human wants as planes are shaped for speed." The camera's doubly-functional perspective establishes an unmistakable relationship between the evolution of technology and that of the city itself.

The penultimate scene of the documentary shows a close-up shot of two American boys against the sky, both happily looking at a shiny airplane miniature, clasped in the hands of one of them. The scene seems to propose dual but mutually inclusive symbolism: First,

aerial transportation was to be the symbol par excellence of the future; and, second, the protagonist builders of that future are the boys of today. Informed by the period's eugenicist fantasy that aviators represented a superior breed of *homo sapiens*, the scene suggests that the boys would pilot humanity toward a resplendent future.¹¹ *The City's* romance of the airplane as a tool, enabling a gaze into an ideal tomorrow, was a leitmotif of the 1939 New York World's Fair.

The fair's skyward bravado, so to speak, found a global outlet in July 1938, when Howard Hughes, the acclaimed American aviator and entrepreneur, flew around the world in record time in a Lockheed 14-N Super Electra, named New York World's Fair 1939.¹² Upon hearing the news of Hughes' successful flight, the jubilant expression of Grover A. Whalen, president of the 1939 New York World's Fair Inc., demonstrates how much the fair's promoters were eager to exploit the American romance with the aviator as a publicity stunt.¹³ Whalen's description of the Hughes flight in his autobiography *Mr. New York* is instructive in understanding how much aviation appealed to the fair organizers as a surefire symbol of the World of Tomorrow:

Word reached me about this time [1938] that Howard Hughes was contemplating a round-the-world flight. We were well under way with our plans for the New York World's Fair, and quite naturally the thought of tying in Hughes' flight as part of the promotion struck me as a good one.

I set about the task of "selling" him the New York World's Fair as an added passenger...To our great delight, he then announced that he had decided to name his plane the New York World's Fair and that he would carry the message of the Fair with him to thirty countries.

[..]

When Hughes, haggard and unshaven, returned to Floyd Bennett Field at 2:37 P.M. on July 14th, Mayor La Guardia and I were there to welcome him. So were 20,000 other New Yorkers.¹⁴

Whalen was no stranger to extravagant public receptions of celebrity aviators and other dignitaries. As New York City's "official greeter" under Mayor Jimmy Walker, Whalen organized the greatest ticker-tape parade for Charles Lindbergh in New York on June 13, 1927.¹⁵ He accorded one to Hughes, too, in 1938, fully knowing the potential of its effectiveness to publicize the 1939 fair. Cognizant of the American veneration of the aviator as an indomitable figure confronting the elements of nature with individual determination, Whalen shrewdly blended a popular myth with corporate marketing propaganda. Reminiscent of the ways the St. Louis business establishment sponsored and named Lindbergh's airplane *Spirit of St. Louis*, Hughes' airplane, called *The New York World's Fair 1939*, could not have been a more apt global advertisement for the fair. The figure of the aviator, Whalen reasoned, would appeal to an international audience as a universal icon cohering a global fraternity.

That appeal was fully exploited within the fair's futurist ambitions and evolutionary ideologies, often fraught with a eugenicist suggestion that it was possible to engineer an improved human stock, devoid of any hereditary impurities.¹⁶ Ascending (male) figures frequently populated the World of Tomorrow, as attested, for instance, by the cover of *1001 Facts About The World's Fair and New York* (Fig. 3). With wings attached to their muscular physiques, men of tomorrow glide over the vertiginous morphology of New York City or take off from the Theme Center's ramp, called the Helicline, to reach a higher evolutionary plateau. The fair's organizers, architects, industrial designers, sculptors, and mural artists cleverly exploited the wing theme as a utopian vessel—harking back to the mythos of Daedalus and Icarus, as well as Leonardo da Vinci—that would transport humanity to the abstract space of an idealized tomorrow. Examples abound: Robert Foster's free-floating, stainless-steel human figure with a cape which adorned the crown of the Ford Motor Company's pavilion; the architect James Gambrel Rogers' wing-like pylons that flanked the entrance rotunda of the Chrysler Motors Building; Joseph E. Reiner's sculpture called *Speed*, which depicted a woman on a winged horse bursting forth from a fountain pool in the fair's Court of Communications; and the mural, which portrayed a winged figure afloat in the sky, on the entrance façade of the Hall of Music, designed by Reinhard and Hofmeister (Fig. 3). These representative works evince how powerfully the wing metaphor perpetuated the fair organizers' collective gospel of progress and evolutionary aesthetics.

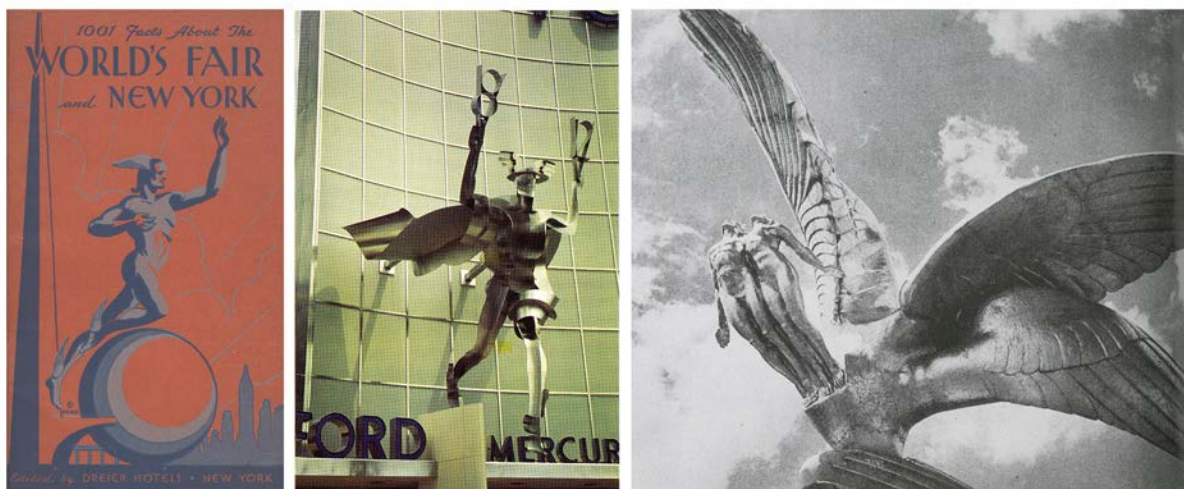


Figure 3. (left) A flying male figure on the cover of a 1939 World's Fair publicity brochure; (center) Robert Foster's sculpture at the Ford Pavilion; (right) Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney's sculpture 'Wings.'

Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney, American sculptor and founder of the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York City in 1931, contributed a sculpture to the fair called *To the Morrow*, popularly known as the *Wings* (Fig. 3). The sculpture, with a 24-foot span, consists of three wings without a body proper, merging into an inclined base for two figures—one male and one female, probably meant to be the procreators of a new civilization—perfectly poised to ascend to the World of Tomorrow. While Whitney dubbed it an homage to youth, New York City Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia called it a tribute to aviation during its dedication.¹⁷ These two perspectives were hardly mutually exclusive. From the viewpoint

of the fair's conscious social engineering, youth and aviation appeared to be the two sides of one evolutionary coin. The attainment of the World of Tomorrow was predicated on a harmonious blending of human and technological evolution.

The wing was hardly a revolutionary symbol of the 1939 New York World's Fair; rather, the fair's organizers and its designers drew on a well-circulating visual emblem of the interwar period. The fluid lines of Art Deco and the unobstructed mobility of streamline aesthetics could not be more convincingly represented by anything other than the wing and its mythologies of flight and speed. Norman Bel Geddes's medal, designed in 1933 on the occasion of General Motors' 25th anniversary, shows that the advancement of motor transportation is visualized by the kinesthetic power of a wing placed above a streamlined car. An advertisement in *Popular Aviation* in 1933 echoes similar sentiments: "A New World for Ambitious Men." The new generation of men must learn how to maneuver the mechanical wing, so that "[y]ou will conquer a new kingdom whose borders we have only crossed."¹⁸ In this ideological construction, the wing implied a type of privileged suspension in the sky, away from the mire of the ground, enabling unrestrained abilities of futurist projections. The wing, in other words, opened up a seductive vista onto a new kingdom, a utopia. Artists, architects, and social reformers employed the theme of the wing as an emblem of future-gazing, with the implied suggestion that future-gazing was the hallowed calling of a new breed of high-caliber men. The wing was a new halo.

The 1939 fair staged its winged drama with spectacular exhibitionism, both outside and inside the fair's Theme Center, designed by the architectural firm of Wallace K. Harrison and J. Andre Fouilhoux. The Theme Center consisted of three discreet forms, namely, the 700-foot-high three-sided obelisk called Trylon; the globular Perisphere, 200 feet in diameter; and the spiral Helicline, a 950-foot-long ramp. Proffering majestic counterpoints to the dual threats of the Depression and the impending cataclysm of war in Europe through orchestrated optimism, the Theme Center was the apex of the fair's future-gazing campaign. James Earle Fraser's mammoth statue of George Washington, clad in his original inaugural robe, recounting, with a patriotic register, Washington's inauguration as President in New York City 150 years ago, stood on the central axis of the fair which ran along the Constitution Mall between the Theme Center and the U.S. government's Federal Building. This positioning of Washington's statue by the fair's planners on the central axis was a self-conscious tactic to produce the illusion that Washington was gazing at the Perisphere; as Robert W. Rydell observed, "his back on years of progress, his eyes on the future. The philosophical suggestion is that with 150 years of successful democratic government, founded by Washington and the men of his generation, behind the nation of today, America can face the World of Tomorrow, represented by the huge, modernistic, and unorthodox structures of the Perisphere and Trylon, with the same cool assurance that the first president exhibits in his massive sculpture."¹⁹ Rydell also noted one fair enthusiast's wry remarks: "Perhaps to George Washington, the Perisphere is a huge crystal ball, telling of the 'shape of things to come.'"²⁰

The Perisphere was not, however, merely Washington’s crystal ball; it was also like a mythical womb inside which the fairgoers found themselves in a godlike position to foresee the birth of the fair’s “official” utopia (Fig. 4). That utopia took shape in the form of the industrial designer Henry Dreyfuss’s keynote exhibit, Democracy, described in the haughty language of the fair’s Official Guide Book as the “symbol of a perfectly integrated, futuristic metropolis pulsing with life and rhythm and music.”²¹ A highly choreographed journey preceded the drama of beholding Democracy inside the Perisphere. The fairgoers first entered the Trylon at the ground level and then ascended to the Perisphere by means of two escalators—considered the highest in the world at the time. Once they reached the entrance to the iconic white globe, they stepped onto one of two revolving and seemingly suspended balconies that ran the entire inner circumference of the Perisphere, like two parallel latitudes. Revolving in opposite directions, the balconies took six minutes to make a complete revolution, the time allotted for the fairgoers to witness, from a simulated sky, the large and realistic diorama of a planned urban and exurban ensemble of 2039. The propagandistic spectacle was accompanied by a musical score by William Grant Still, conducted by Andre Kostelanetz, and a touchy-feely narration of progress in the megapolis of the future, spoken by the popular newscaster H. V. Kaltenborn.²² *The Official Guide Book* described Dreyfuss’s blueprint of a harmonious civilization from the vantage point of a future aviating citizenry:

Here is a city of a million people with a working population of 250,000, whose homes are located beyond the city-proper, in five satellite towns. Like great arteries, broad highways traverse expansive areas of vivid green countryside, connecting outlying industrial towns with the city’s heart. After you have gazed at the model for two minutes, dusk slowly shadows the scene. The light fails, and the celestial concave gleams with myriad stars. To the accompaniment of a symphonic poem, a chorus of a thousand voices reaches out of the heavens, and there at ten equidistant points in the purple dome loom marching men—farmers, stamped by their garb; mechanics, with their tools of trade. As the marchers approach they are seen to represent the various groups in modern society—all the elements which must work together to make possible the better life which flourishes in such a city as lies below.²³



Figure 4. An axonometric drawing of the Perisphere showing “Democracy” in the interior.

The quasi-prophetic and moralizing predictions of Democracy included a visual compilation of the period’s popular urban planning ideologies, ranging from Ebenezer Howard’s Garden City to Le Corbusier’s Ville Contemporaine and Frank Lloyd Wright’s Broadacre City. Democracy blended all of these ideas with moving visual and aural choreography, extolling the glories of democracy, market economy, and a technologically streamlined life available to people of all walks of life. The exhibit’s mantra

of progress and marching forward toward an ideal republic was further dramatized by a chorus of voices singing the fair's theme song (rhymed by Ira Gershwin): "We're the rising tide come from far and wide/Marching side by side on our way,/For a brave new world,/Tomorrow's world,/That we shall build today." The theme song's reference to Aldous Huxley's best-selling novel *Brave New World* (1932) invoked the image of progress as a free-for-all solution, while avoiding its dystopic interpretation of corporate social engineering.

Democracity was, above all, a theatrical performance in which the spectators on the revolving balconies were also designed to be seen as part of the exhibit. If the theme exhibit offered an architectural manifestation of the brave new world, then the fairgoers, perched on the revolving balconies gazing down, evoked the image of the aviator as the redeemer of a chaotic world below. Democracity's balconies played out an aviation theme, centering on the airplane eye that enabled a synoptic viewing of Dreyfuss's metropolis as it would manifest itself a hundred years into the future. Such visual technology exemplified the fair's persistent display methods that engaged spectators, as Warren Susman and Roland Marchand note, in ways no previous world's fairs had attempted.²⁴

Democracity highlighted how the fair's corporate sponsors and designers endeavored to legitimize the fairgoers' perception of the World of Tomorrow by incorporating the spatio-visual experience of transportation machines. During the halcyon days of air travel and aerial photography, infusing the key exhibits at the fair with the futuristic promise of aviation worked to the great advantage of the fair's organizers. The most popular attraction of the 1939 fair, the Transportation Zone, abandoned the conventional static exhibit-in-front-of-the-spectator display of transportation machines. Instead, the Zone favored creating spatial experiences that cars, railways, and airplanes would summon in the simulated environment of the future city.²⁵ Transportation exhibits became convincing as animated performances when they were placed within the rhetorical space of the future. Thus, not surprising, according to one survey, the fair's two most utopian extravaganzas—General Motors' Futurama and the Theme Center's Democracity—topped the list of fairgoers' most favorite exhibits.²⁶

The alluring narrative of the flying machine's potential passage to utopia—that utopia was merely one flight away—could not find a more credible special-effect demonstration than in the industrial designer Norman Bel Geddes's Futurama, presented as part of the automobile giant General Motors' Highways and Horizons exhibit in the Transportation Zone. According to a special survey conducted among World's Fair visitors by the American Institute of Public Opinion, under the direction of George Gallup, in May 1939, Futurama "far outranked" all other exhibits in popularity.²⁷

Under General Motors' corporate sponsorship, Bel Geddes hypothesized the future as a one-acre animated model of an American utopia as it might appear in the year 1960 to aviating citizens traveling in an airplane, a transportation technology that, in the late 1930s, still fascinated a whole generation of Americans.²⁸ Touted in a General Motors leaflet as

“the largest and most lifelike model ever constructed,” Futurama was a 35,738-square-foot visual extravaganza containing approximately “500,000 individually designed houses; more than a million trees of 18 species; and 50,000 scale-model automobiles, of which 10,000 are in actual operation over super-highways, speed lanes and multidecked bridges.”²⁹ Bel Geddes’s exhibit translated the future into a captivating spectacle in which a wholesome ecological package of “abundant sunshine, fresh air, and green parkways” seamlessly blended with a continental highway network, power infrastructures, streamlined skyscrapers, and futuristic airports.

But a mammoth display of the future alone could not account for such spectacular popularity of Futurama. There had to be another element galvanizing the fairgoers. The technique of seeing the future itself arguably made Futurama a “smash hit,” attracting on average more than 28,000 spectators a day. Carried above the gargantuan model by means of a suspended, winding conveyor belt that simulated the experience of flight, spectators attained an airplane view of the so-called World of Tomorrow (Fig. 5). The 18-minute ride—along with a masterful manipulation of light, sound, and scale—created the illusion of a day-night aerial journey over the meticulously crafted terrain of an American utopia. Belonging to the early-twentieth-century airplane generation and as an amateur designer of futuristic aircrafts, Bel Geddes’ fascination with human flight was predictable. Yet, while the airplane was a ubiquitous symbol in the 1939 New York World’s Fair’s futurist agenda, the theatrical replication of the experience of flight on a mass scale ensured Futurama’s novelty.

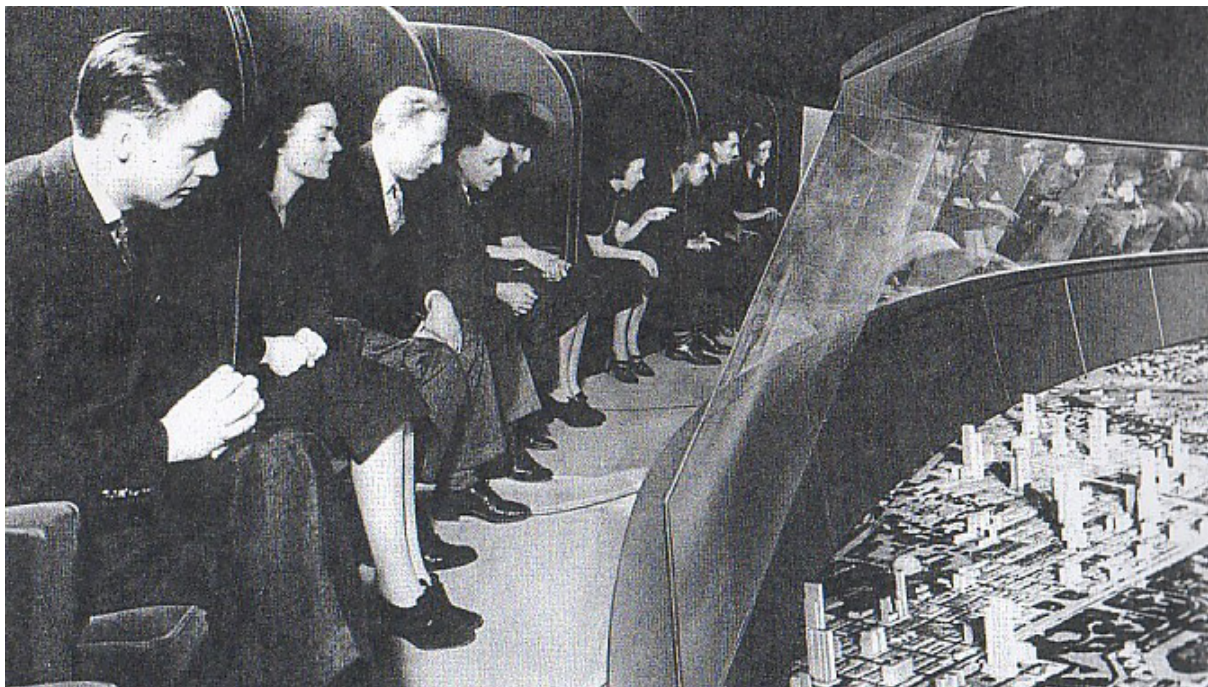


Figure 5. Futurama visitors view the World of a Tomorrow. from a moving conveyer belt.

As if it were a dramatic technological analog of what scholars of American utopian novels called “ahistorical devices of time travel,” Futurama’s conveyor belt performed the peculiar role of an imaginary bridge that transported spectators from the real world of 1939 to

the utopian space of 1960.³⁰ Once spectators took their seats, the conveyor belt passed through a semi-dark vestibule—that ambiguous transitional space connecting the real with the fictional—while an avuncular voice from a sound system concealed at shoulder level in each pair of chairs acted as a private guide to spectators, as they traveled along an aerial route. It all began with a cheerful invitation to a simulated airplane journey across America: “Come tour the future with General Motors! A Transcontinental flight over America in 1960. What will we see? What changes will transpire? This magic Aladdin-like flight through time and space is Norman Bel Geddes’ conception of the many wonders that may develop in the not-too-distant future. Now we have arrived in this wonder world of 1960!”³¹

Futurama’s one-acre model, especially its intelligibility to an aerial spectator, was developed on the basis of aerial photographs of different regions of the United States, provided by the pioneering company Fairchild Aerial Surveys. Bel Geddes and his crew thoroughly studied the photographs to establish Futurama’s environmental effects, ingenuously transforming the conveyor ride into the impression of a continental flight over various geographic terrains and urban regions. When spectators exited from Futurama, they were presented with a souvenir pin that read, “I have seen the future.”

The premise of futuristic follies like Democracy or Futurama and their rendezvous with the World of Tomorrow was built on a powerful myth that America had always been about seeing the future rather than contemplating the past.³² On April 30, 1939, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, inaugurating the New York World’s Fair, reiterated that myth when he proclaimed “the eyes of the United States are fixed on the future.” In the same vein, the 1939 fair’s corporate sponsors and the New York elite drummed up these future-gazing impulses as part of an American mythology to dispel the economic woes of the Great Depression. The 1939 fair’s success depended on, they reasoned, whether the American ethos of future-gazing could be seamlessly blended with consumerist utopias of efficiency and social order. But the key challenge in accomplishing this goal resided in the ability to present the abstract space of the future as tangible, experiential fantasies. The seductive theme of ascension—imbued with deep mythological histories and, at the fair, highlighted by allegorical wings, Icarus figures, floating balconies, and aviating conveyor belts—could not have been a more apt launching pad for setting out for an ideal future.

The task of ascending to the World of Tomorrow was perhaps most daringly contemplated by Donald Deskey’s focal exhibit (housed in the Chrysler Building in Transportation Zone) that climaxed in the departure of a commuter rocket for a suborbital trip to London. *The New York Times* reported: “Here with the startling effects of light, speed, sound, and distance, a rocketship is loaded into a gigantic gun and launched into the night, to go winging into the vast reaches of the sky toward London.”³³ The psychological epicenter of the 1939 fair’s motto, “Building the World of Tomorrow,” could in many ways be located in the desire to conquer “the vast reaches of the sky.”

¹A copy of the winning poster is in the Prints and Photographs Division of the Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

²For the symbolism of the airplane in the 1939 fair, see Gerald Wendt, *Science for the World of Tomorrow* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., Inc., 1939), 104-113.

³*New York World's Fair Illustrated by Camera* (New York: Manhattan Post Card Publishing Co., Inc., 1939), licensed by New York World's Fair. The centerpiece of the brochure is an airplane view of the fairground.

⁴*Official Guide Book, New York World's Fair: The World of Tomorrow, 1939* (New York: Expositions Publications, 1939), 8-9.

⁵See Eugene A. Santomaso, "The Design of Reason: Architecture and Planning at the 1939/40 New York World's Fair," in Helen A. Harrison (guest curator), *Dawn of a New Day: The New York World's Fair, 1939/40* (New York: Queens Museum/New York University Press, 1980), 30-31.

⁶Burton Benedict, *Anthropology of World's Fairs* (London: Scholar Press, 1983), 5.

⁷See for instance William M. Leary, ed., *Aviation's Golden Age: Portraits from the 1920s and 1930s* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1989); Roger E. Bilstein, *Flight in America 1900-1983: From the Wrights to the Astronauts* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1984); and Dominick Pisano, ed., *The Airplane in American Culture* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2003).

⁸In the postwar period, deterministic worldviews of technology as an autonomous agent of social transformation began to be questioned. See Leo Marx, "The Idea of 'Technology' and Postmodern Pessimism," in *Does Technology Drive History: The Dilemma of Technological Determinism*, eds. Merritt Roe Smith and Leo Marx (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1998).

⁹The other two documentaries were General Motors' *New Horizons* and Westinghouse's *The Middleton Family at the Fair*.

¹⁰See, for instance, Howard Gillette, Jr., "Film as Artifact: The City (1939)," *American Studies* 18/2 (1977), 71-85.

¹¹Joseph J. Corn, "Adults and the 'Winged Superchildren of Tomorrow'," in *The Winged Gospel: America's Romance with Aviation, 1900-1950* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 113-133.

¹²On July 10, 1938, 33-year old Hughes embarked on the round-the-world flight with a crew of four, finishing the journey in three days, 19 hours, and 8 minutes. Making Hughes a national hero, the event was a huge publicity stunt for the 1939 New York World's Fair.

¹³George J. Marrett, *Howard Hughes, Aviator* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2004), 38-39.

¹⁴Grover A. Whalen, *Mr. New York: The Autobiography of Grover Whalen* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1955), 191-193.

¹⁵Michael Aronson, "Grover Whalen Welcome to New York City," *The News* (Apr. 9, 1999). Also see Whalen, *Mr. New York*, 112-128.

¹⁶For eugenic affiliations at the fair, see Robert W. Rydell "'Fitter Families for Future Firesides': Eugenics Exhibitions between the Wars," in *World of Fairs: The Century-of-Progress Expositions* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 38-58.

¹⁷Larry Zim, Mel Lerner, and Herbert Rolfes, *The World of Tomorrow: The 1939 New York World's Fair* (New York: Main Street Press, 1988), 182.

¹⁸*Popular Aviation* (Aug. 1933), 79.

¹⁹Robert W. Rydell, *World of Fairs*, 131.

²⁰*Ibid.*, 131.

²¹*Official Guide Book, New York World's Fair*, 44.

²²Stanley Applebaum, *The New York World's Fair 1939/1940* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1977), 3. Also see *1939: Music and the World's Fair*, foreword by Jonathan Sheffer.

²³*Official Guide Book, New York World's Fair*, 44-45.

²⁴Warren I. Susman, "The People's Fair: Cultural Contradictions of a Consumer Society," in Harrison (guest curator), *Dawn of a New Day*, 17-27; Roland Marchand, "The Designers Go to the Fair II: Norman Bel Geddes, The General Motors "Futurama," and the Visit to the Factory Transformed," *Design Issues* 8/2 (Spring 1992), 22-40.

²⁵Other zones of the fair, as classified by their exhibits' relationship to modern society, were Transportation; Production and Distribution; Government; Food; Community Interests; Communications and Business Systems; and Amusement.

²⁶David Gelernter, *1939: The Lost World of the Fair* (New York: Avon Books, 1995), 26.

²⁷See General Motors press release, May 30, 1939, in File 381.48, Norman Bel Geddes Collection, Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, University of Texas, Austin (hereafter NBG Collection, HRC).

²⁸For a general discussion of Futurama, see Donald J. Bush, "Futurama: World's Fair as Utopia," *Alternative Futures* 2 (Fall 1979); Barbara Hauss-Fitton, "Futurama, New York World's Fair 1939-1940," *Rassegna* 60 (Spring 1994); and Marchand, "The Designers Go to the Fair II".

²⁹See File 381.48, NBG Collection, HRC. The model was constructed by George Wittbold Studios, Chicago.

³⁰For a good analysis of the literary device of time travel in American utopian novels, see Kenneth M. Roemer, ed. *America as Utopia* (New York: Burt Franklin and Co., 1981).

³¹A detailed (typed) transcript of Futurama's description is in File 381.30, NBG Collection, HRC.

³²For an elaboration of this theme, see Herbert Croly, *The Promise of American Life* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1909) and Edmundo O'Gorman, *The Invention of America: An Inquiry into the Historical Nature of the New World and the Meaning of Its History* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1961).

³³Quoted in Zim, Lerner, and Rolfes, *The World of Tomorrow*, 107.

IMAGE CREDITS

1-2. Copyright New York: Exposition Publications, Inc, 1939.

3. (Left) Copyright Dreier Hotels Mgt. Corp., 1939. (Center, Right) Larry Zim, Mel Lerner, and Herbert Rolfes. *The World of Tomorrow: The 1939 New York World's Fair*, 116, 182. New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1988.

4. Public domain.

5. From the exhibition catalog *Designing Tomorrow: America's World's Fairs of the 1930s*, 182.

Epilogue

Visit to the World's Fair of 2014

By Isaac Asimov | The New York Times | August 16, 1964

The New York World's Fair of 1964 is dedicated to "Peace Through Understanding." Its glimpses of the world of tomorrow rule out thermonuclear warfare. And why not? If a thermonuclear war takes place, the future will not be worth discussing. So let the missiles slumber eternally on their pads and let us observe what may come in the nonatomized world of the future.

What is to come, through the fair's eyes at least, is wonderful. The direction in which man is traveling is viewed with buoyant hope, nowhere more so than at the General Electric pavilion. There the audience whirls through four scenes, each populated by cheerful, lifelike dummies that move and talk with a facility that, inside of a minute and a half, convinces you they are alive.

The scenes, set in or about 1900, 1920, 1940 and 1960, show the advances of electrical appliances and the changes they are bringing to living. I enjoyed it hugely and only regretted that they had not carried the scenes into the future. What will life be like, say, in 2014 A.D., 50 years from now? What will the World's Fair of 2014 be like?

I don't know, but I can guess.

One thought that occurs to me is that men will continue to withdraw from nature in order to create an environment that will suit them better. By 2014, electroluminescent panels will be in common use. Ceilings and walls will glow softly, and in a variety of colors that will change at the touch of a push button.

Windows need be no more than an archaic touch, and even when present will be polarized to block out the harsh sunlight. The degree of opacity of the glass may even be made to alter automatically in accordance with the intensity of the light falling upon it.

There is an underground house at the fair which is a sign of the future. If its windows are not polarized, they can nevertheless alter the "scenery" by changes in lighting. Suburban houses underground, with easily controlled temperature, free from the vicissitudes of

weather, with air cleaned and light controlled, should be fairly common. At the New York World's Fair of 2014, General Motors' "Futurama" may well display vistas of underground cities complete with light- forced vegetable gardens. The surface, G.M. will argue, will be given over to large-scale agriculture, grazing and parklands, with less space wasted on actual human occupancy.

Gadgetry will continue to relieve mankind of tedious jobs. Kitchen units will be devised that will prepare "automeals," heating water and converting it to coffee; toasting bread; frying, poaching or scrambling eggs, grilling bacon, and so on. Breakfasts will be "ordered" the night before to be ready by a specified hour the next morning. Complete lunches and dinners, with the food semiprepared, will be stored in the freezer until ready for processing. I suspect, though, that even in 2014 it will still be advisable to have a small corner in the kitchen unit where the more individual meals can be prepared by hand, especially when company is coming.

Robots will neither be common nor very good in 2014, but they will be in existence. The I.B.M. exhibit at the present fair has no robots but it is dedicated to computers, which are shown in all their amazing complexity, notably in the task of translating Russian into English. If machines are that smart today, what may not be in the works 50 years hence? It will be such computers, much miniaturized, that will serve as the "brains" of robots. In fact, the I.B.M. building at the 2014 World's Fair may have, as one of its prime exhibits, a robot housemaid*large, clumsy, slow- moving but capable of general picking-up, arranging, cleaning and manipulation of various appliances. It will undoubtedly amuse the fairgoers to scatter debris over the floor in order to see the robot lumberingly remove it and classify it into "throw away" and "set aside." (Robots for gardening work will also have made their appearance.)

General Electric at the 2014 World's Fair will be showing 3-D movies of its "Robot of the Future," neat and streamlined, its cleaning appliances built in and performing all tasks briskly. (There will be a three-hour wait in line to see the film, for some things never change.)

The appliances of 2014 will have no electric cords, of course, for they will be powered by long- lived batteries running on radioisotopes. The isotopes will not be expensive for they will be by- products of the fission-power plants which, by 2014, will be supplying well over half the power needs of humanity. But once the isotope batteries are used up they will be disposed of only through authorized agents of the manufacturer.

And experimental fusion-power plant or two will already exist in 2014. (Even today, a small but genuine fusion explosion is demonstrated at frequent intervals in the G.E. exhibit at the 1964 fair.) Large solar-power stations will also be in operation in a number of desert and semi-desert areas -- Arizona, the Negev, Kazakhstan. In the more crowded, but cloudy and smoggy areas, solar power will be less practical. An exhibit at the 2014 fair will show

models of power stations in space, collecting sunlight by means of huge parabolic focusing devices and radiating the energy thus collected down to earth.

The world of 50 years hence will have shrunk further. At the 1964 fair, the G.M. exhibit depicts, among other things, "road-building factories" in the tropics and, closer to home, crowded highways along which long buses move on special central lanes. There is every likelihood that highways at least in the more advanced sections of the world*will have passed their peak in 2014; there will be increasing emphasis on transportation that makes the least possible contact with the surface. There will be aircraft, of course, but even ground travel will increasingly take to the air*a foot or two off the ground. Visitors to the 1964 fair can travel there in an "aquafoil," which lifts itself on four stilts and skims over the water with a minimum of friction. This is surely a stop-gap. By 2014 the four stilts will have been replaced by four jets of compressed air so that the vehicle will make no contact with either liquid or solid surfaces.

Jets of compressed air will also lift land vehicles off the highways, which, among other things, will minimize paving problems. Smooth earth or level lawns will do as well as pavements. Bridges will also be of less importance, since cars will be capable of crossing water on their jets, though local ordinances will discourage the practice.

Much effort will be put into the designing of vehicles with "Robot-brains"*vehicles that can be set for particular destinations and that will then proceed there without interference by the slow reflexes of a human driver. I suspect one of the major attractions of the 2014 fair will be rides on small roboticized cars which will maneuver in crowds at the two-foot level, neatly and automatically avoiding each other.

For short-range travel, moving sidewalks (with benches on either side, standing room in the center) will be making their appearance in downtown sections. They will be raised above the traffic. Traffic will continue (on several levels in some places) only because all parking will be off-street and because at least 80 per cent of truck deliveries will be to certain fixed centers at the city's rim. Compressed air tubes will carry goods and materials over local stretches, and the switching devices that will place specific shipments in specific destinations will be one of the city's marvels.

Communications will become sight-sound and you will see as well as hear the person you telephone. The screen can be used not only to see the people you call but also for studying documents and photographs and reading passages from books. Synchronous satellites, hovering in space will make it possible for you to direct-dial any spot on earth, including the weather stations in Antarctica (shown in chill splendor as part of the '64 General Motors exhibit).

For that matter, you will be able to reach someone at the moon colonies, concerning which General Motors puts on a display of impressive vehicles (in model form) with large soft tires*intended to negotiate the uneven terrain that may exist on our natural satellite.

Any number of simultaneous conversations between earth and moon can be handled by modulated laser beams, which are easy to manipulate in space. On earth, however, laser beams will have to be led through plastic pipes, to avoid material and atmospheric interference. Engineers will still be playing with that problem in 2014.

Conversations with the moon will be a trifle uncomfortable, but the way, in that 2.5 seconds must elapse between statement and answer (it takes light that long to make the round trip). Similar conversations with Mars will experience a 3.5-minute delay even when Mars is at its closest. However, by 2014, only unmanned ships will have landed on Mars, though a manned expedition will be in the works and in the 2014 Futurama will show a model of an elaborate Martian colony.

As for television, wall screens will have replaced the ordinary set; but transparent cubes will be making their appearance in which three-dimensional viewing will be possible. In fact, one popular exhibit at the 2014 World's Fair will be such a 3-D TV, built life-size, in which ballet performances will be seen. The cube will slowly revolve for viewing from all angles.

One can go on indefinitely in this happy extrapolation, but all is not rosy.

As I stood in line waiting to get into the General Electric exhibit at the 1964 fair, I found myself staring at Equitable Life's grim sign blinking out the population of the United States, with the number (over 191,000,000) increasing by 1 every 11 seconds. During the interval which I spent inside the G.E. pavilion, the American population had increased by nearly 300 and the world's population by 6,000.

In 2014, there is every likelihood that the world population will be 6,500,000,000 and the population of the United States will be 350,000,000. Boston-to-Washington, the most crowded area of its size on the earth, will have become a single city with a population of over 40,000,000.

Population pressure will force increasing penetration of desert and polar areas. Most surprising and, in some ways, heartening, 2014 will see a good beginning made in the colonization of the continental shelves. Underwater housing will have its attractions to those who like water sports, and will undoubtedly encourage the more efficient exploitation of ocean resources, both food and mineral. General Motors shows, in its 1964 exhibit, the model of an underwater hotel of what might be called mouth-watering luxury. The 2014 World's Fair will have exhibits showing cities in the deep sea with bathyscaphe liners carrying men and supplies across and into the abyss.

Ordinary agriculture will keep up with great difficulty and there will be “farms” turning to the more efficient micro-organisms. Processed yeast and algae products will be available in a variety of flavors. The 2014 fair will feature an Algae Bar at which “mock-turkey” and “pseudosteak” will be served. It won’t be bad at all (if you can dig up those premium prices), but there will be considerable psychological resistance to such an innovation.

Although technology will still keep up with population through 2014, it will be only through a supreme effort and with but partial success. Not all the world’s population will enjoy the gadgety world of the future to the full. A larger portion than today will be deprived and although they may be better off, materially, than today, they will be further behind when compared with the advanced portions of the world. They will have moved backward, relatively.

Nor can technology continue to match population growth if that remains unchecked. Consider Manhattan of 1964, which has a population density of 80,000 per square mile at night and of over 100,000 per square mile during the working day. If the whole earth, including the Sahara, the Himalayan Mountain peaks, Greenland, Antarctica and every square mile of the ocean bottom, to the deepest abyss, were as packed as Manhattan at noon, surely you would agree that no way to support such a population (let alone make it comfortable) was conceivable. In fact, support would fail long before the World-Manhattan was reached.

Well, the earth’s population is now about 3,000,000,000 and is doubling every 40 years. If this rate of doubling goes unchecked, then a World-Manhattan is coming in just 500 years. All earth will be a single choked Manhattan by A.D. 2450 and society will collapse long before that!

There are only two general ways of preventing this: (1) raise the death rate; (2) lower the birth rate. Undoubtedly, the world of A>D. 2014 will have agreed on the latter method. Indeed, the increasing use of mechanical devices to replace failing hearts and kidneys, and repair stiffening arteries and breaking nerves will have cut the death rate still further and have lifted the life expectancy in some parts of the world to age 85.

There will, therefore, be a worldwide propaganda drive in favor of birth control by rational and humane methods and, by 2014, it will undoubtedly have taken serious effect. The rate of increase of population will have slackened*but, I suspect, not sufficiently.

One of the more serious exhibits at the 2014 World’s Fair, accordingly, will be a series of lectures, movies and documentary material at the World Population Control Center (adults only; special showings for teen-agers).

The situation will have been made the more serious by the advances of automation. The world of A.D. 2014 will have few routine jobs that cannot be done better by some machine than by any human being. Mankind will therefore have become largely a race of machine tenders. Schools will have to be oriented in this direction. Part of the General Electric exhibit today consists of a school of the future in which such present realities as closed-circuit TV and programmed tapes aid the teaching process. It is not only the techniques of teaching that will advance, however, but also the subject matter that will change. All the high-school students will be taught the fundamentals of computer technology will become proficient in binary arithmetic and will be trained to perfection in the use of the computer languages that will have developed out of those like the contemporary "Fortran" (from "formula translation").

Even so, mankind will suffer badly from the disease of boredom, a disease spreading more widely each year and growing in intensity. This will have serious mental, emotional and sociological consequences, and I dare say that psychiatry will be far and away the most important medical specialty in 2014. The lucky few who can be involved in creative work of any sort will be the true elite of mankind, for they alone will do more than serve a machine.

Indeed, the most somber speculation I can make about A.D. 2014 is that in a society of enforced leisure, the most glorious single word in the vocabulary will have become *work!*

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