

WORLD'S FAIRS: VISIONS OF TOMORROW

World's fairs of the 19th and 20th centuries promised a bright and modern future. Towering architecture, uplifting themes, and dazzling displays of the latest in art, design, engineering, and technology attracted millions to these months-long events, bringing attention to cities across the globe.

This exhibition draws from The Wolfsonian's many thousands of world's fairs items to explore the optimistic spirit of international expositions, which were often hosted against the backdrop of troubling times: the dislocations of the Industrial Revolution, the economic distress of the Great Depression, the anxieties of the Atomic Age, and the growing awareness of environmental crisis in the 1970s. Leading up to a new video installation by artist Marco Brambilla, *World's Fairs: Visions of Tomorrow* spotlights centerpiece structures and iconic buildings that appear in Brambilla's work and inspired fairgoers with the promise of utopia.

World's Fairs: Visions of Tomorrow is organized by The Wolfsonian–FIU and curated by Silvia Barisione and Francis Xavier Luca. The exhibition is made possible by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation.



The Wolfsonian–FIU receives generous support from The Wolfsonian Advisory Board and



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Cards, “**Nave and Crystal Fountain, Crystal Palace**” and “**Second Terrace, Crystal Palace,**” from *Views of the International Exhibition, 1851*

T. Nelson & Sons, London, publisher

4 1/4 x 6 3/4 inches (11 x 17 centimeters)

The Wolfsonian–FIU, Purchase, XC2006.04.1.2.5;

XC2006.04.1.3.2

Souvenir cigarette case, 1851

Great Britain

Silver-plated metal

1 3/8 x 5 1/2 x 2 inches (3.4 x 13.9 x 5 centimeters)

The Wolfsonian–FIU, The Mitchell Wolfson, Jr. Collection, 86.9.28



The first world's fair, the 1851 London Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations, set the stage for many expositions to come. Held in Hyde Park, it took place in the so-called Crystal Palace, a huge glass and cast-iron structure designed by greenhouse architect Sir Joseph Paxton. The Palace's method of construction was a breakthrough that

paved the way for more sophisticated prefabricated design in future world's fairs and beyond.

Paris 1889

The Industrial Revolution sparked widespread anxieties about possible consequences of a rapidly advancing world. To provide a positive view of technological progress and to instill national pride after France's defeat in the Franco-Prussian War, the Exposition Universelle of 1889 in Paris marked the centennial of the French Revolution with a celebration of industrial achievement.

Organizers held a competition to demonstrate French engineering skill, calling for designs for a monumental tower. Of 107 submissions, the winning project was Gustave Eiffel's proposal, a 300-meter-tall iron structure that immediately became a world-famous Paris landmark. Approximately 2 million spectators visited the fair to peer up at the Eiffel Tower, with many taking the opportunity to ascend on elevator lifts—another technological triumph that broke height and load records.



Sculpture, ***La Gloire du fer [The Glory of Iron]***, c. 1889

Arthur Waagen (French, b. East Prussia, now Lithuania, 1833–1898)

Bronze, tin, brass

24 x 16⁷/₈ x 10 inches (60.9 x 42.8 x 25.4 centimeters)

The Wolfsonian–FIU, The Mitchell Wolfson, Jr. Collection, 84.6.14

This sculpture celebrates the physical labor required to build the Eiffel Tower, originally constructed as a monumental centerpiece to the 1889 Paris exposition. Between 150 and 300 workers used 2.5 million bolts and rivets to assemble the 18,000 iron pieces hauled up by steam cranes.



Print, ***Eiffel Tower***, 1889

Auguste Lepere (French, 1849–1918)

Ink, paper

13¹/₈ x 10⁵/₈ inches (33.3 x 26.9 centimeters)

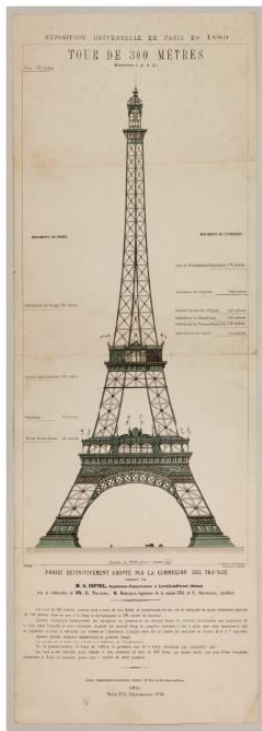
The Wolfsonian–FIU, The Mitchell Wolfson, Jr. Collection, 85.4.70

This print is an illustration for an article by Henri Lavedan in *La Revue Illustrée*. Lavedan's piece reported the news that police had to intervene when a visitor, disturbed by the height of the structure, attempted to jump off the second platform.



"L'Architecture à L'Exposition Universelle" by Henri Lavedan in *La Revue Illustrée*, 1889.

The Wolfsonian–FIU, The Mitchell Wolfson, Jr. Collection, 86.2.237



Plan, **G. Eiffel, *Tour de 300 mètres: Projet de monument commémoratif à ériger à l'Exposition universelle de 1889*** [G. Eiffel, **300 Meter Tower: Project for a Commemorative Monument to be Erected at the 1889 Universal Exhibition**, from *Projet d'une tour colossale en fer de 300 mètres de hauteur* [Project for a Colossal Iron Tower 300 Meters High], 1884

Emile Nouguier (French, 1840–1897) and Maurice Koechlin (French and Swiss, 1856–1946), from Maison Eiffel, Levallois-Perret, France, engineers
 Stephen Sauvestre (French, 1847–1919), architect
 35³/₈ x 12¹/₄ inches (90 x 37 centimeters)

Plan, ***Exposition universelle de Paris en 1889: Tour de 300 mètres: Projet définitivement adopté par la Commission des Travaux*** [Paris Universal Exhibition in 1889: 300 Meter Tower: Project Definitively Adopted by the Works Commission], 1889

Gigon, Paris, publisher

L. N. Dauriac, Paris, printer

21¹/₄ x 13³/₄ inches (54 x 35 centimeters)

The Wolfsonian-FIU, Long-term Loan, The Mitchell Wolfson, Jr. Private Collection, Miami, Florida, XM1999.160.3, .1



In the lead-up to the 1889 exposition in Paris, French newspapers and periodicals published accounts of the controversial competition for the design of a “colossal tower” on the fairgrounds. Engineer and entrepreneur Gustave Eiffel submitted his proposal in 1884, and this plan, by architect Stephen Sauvestre and Eiffel’s collaborating engineers, was published that same year (left). Their original design won the competition and was realized with only minor modifications (right).



Medallion, ***Souvenir de mon ascension au Sommet de la Tour Eiffel*** [***Souvenir of My Ascent to the Summit of the Eiffel Tower***], 1889

Charles Trotin (French, 1833–1904), designer
Usine Metallurgique Parisienne, Paris, manufacturer
Copper

1⁵/₈ diameter x 1/₈ inches

The Wolfsonian–FIU, The Mitchell Wolfson, Jr. Collection, 86.1.582



Medallion, ***Sommet de la Tour Eiffel, souvenir de l'ascension*** [***Summit of the Eiffel Tower, Souvenir of the Ascension***], 1889

Alexandre Louis-Marie Charpentier (French, 1856–1909)
Bronze

1⁵/₈ diameter x 3/₈ inches

The Wolfsonian–FIU, The Mitchell Wolfson, Jr. Collection, 2022.7.1126

These souvenir medallions were designed for visitors who went to the top of the Eiffel Tower. Trotin's celebrates humankind's greatest architectural feats, listed at the bottom by name and height; at 300 meters, the Eiffel Tower is shown stretching far above the rest. Charpentier's depicts the construction effort that made the tower possible.



Book page spread, ***Les merveilles de l'Exposition de 1889*** [***The Wonders of the 1889 Exhibition***], 1899

Narcisse Navallier (French, 1837–1907) and Léon Alexandre Marie (French, 1845–1917), engravers
Librairie Illustrée, Paris, publisher

11 x 16 inches (27.9 x 40.6 centimeters), open

The Wolfsonian–FIU, The Mitchell Wolfson, Jr. Collection, XB1990.1001

Gustav Eiffel's tower was heralded as a technological marvel upon completion and is now a celebrated icon of Paris's skyline. During its construction, however, architects, artists, and writers (including the contributors to this book) criticized the plan, using terms such as "odious column of bolted metal" and "stupefying folly."



Toy, ***La Tour Eiffel. Nouvelle Construction pour enfants. Exposition Universelle de 1889*** [***The Eiffel Tower. New Building for Children. Universal Exposition of 1889***], c. 1889

Paris

Cardboard, paper, and wood

16³/₇ x 10⁵/₈ x 2¹/₂ inches (41.7 x 27 x 6.3 centimeters)

The Wolfsonian–FIU, The Mitchell Wolfson, Jr. Collection of Decorative and Propaganda Arts,
Promised Gift, WC2002.6.14.1

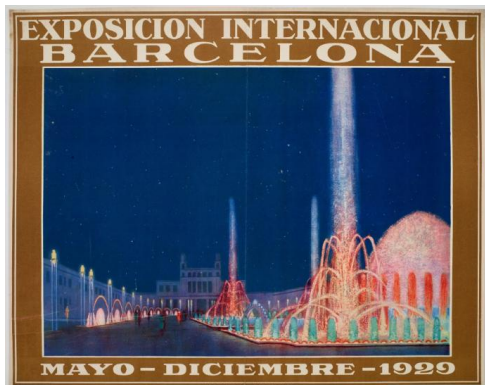


Children's book page spread, *L'Exposition de Paris* [Paris Exposition], c. 1889
L. Van Leer & C., Haarlem, Holland, printer
12⁵/₈ x 20 ¹/₂ inches (32 x 52 centimeters), open
The Wolfsonian-FIU, The Mitchell Wolfson, Jr.
Collection, XC2016.05.10.3

Barcelona 1929

The success of the early world's fairs in the 19th century encouraged many cities to follow their model in the 20th. Barcelona organized its second fair nearly 40 years after its first, which was held in 1888. Showcasing the technological and industrial progress of the Spanish city, the 1929 *Exposición Internacional de Barcelona* was part of an urban development strategy to promote growth and modern industry in the Catalonia region of Spain.

City authorities selected Montjuïc hill as the site of the exposition as well as a future park. The fair, with the theme "Industry, Art, and Sport," was an opportunity for Barcelona to erect several buildings, including the Palau Nacional (National Palace, now Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya) and the Olympic stadium. The German Pavilion—designed by Mies van der Rohe and Lilly Reich to represent the Weimar Republic—became an icon of modernist architecture for its clean lines, combination of indoor and outdoor spaces, and innovative use of steel, glass, and marble.



Poster, *Exposición Internacional Barcelona Mayo-Diciembre 1929* [Barcelona International Exhibition, May–December 1929], 1929

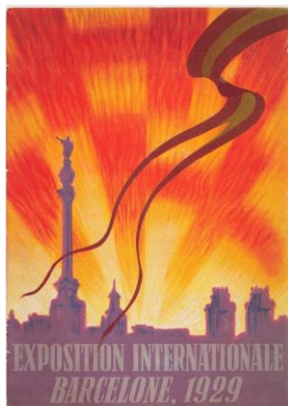
Rieusset S.A., Barcelona, printer

Offset lithograph

22 x 28 inches (55.8 x 71.1 centimeters)

The Wolfsonian–FIU, The Mitchell Wolfson, Jr. Collection, 85.4.94

This promotional poster illustrates a night view of the Magic Fountain of Montjuïc designed by architect Carles Buïgas in collaboration with the German company AEG (Allgemeine Elektrizitäts-Gesellschaft). Its multisensory spectacle of light, color, and water—an innovation at the time—was a main attraction of the fair.



Pamphlet, *Exposition Internationale Barcelone, 1929*, 1929

I. G. Seix & Barral Hnos., S.A., Barcelona, publisher and printer

9³/₈ x 6³/₄ inches (24 x 17 centimeters)

The Wolfsonian–FIU, The Mitchell Wolfson, Jr. Collection,

WC2014.07.1.3

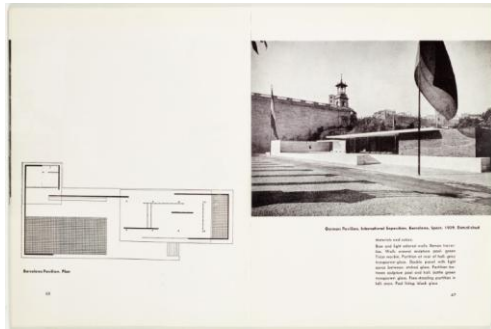


Book page spread, **Exposición Internacional de Barcelona: MCMXXIX**, 1929

Exposición Internacional de Barcelona, publisher
 9⁷/₈ x 27¹/₂ inches (25 x 70 centimeters), open
 The Wolfsonian–FIU, The Mitchell Wolfson, Jr. Collection,
 TD1988.53.22

Designed by Ludwig Mies van der Rohe and Lilly Reich, the German pavilion—now known as the Barcelona pavilion—is a well-recognized example of European modernism and the beginning of the International Style of architecture. The structure featured a pathway through connected spaces, including polished stone walls, glass, and water features in a uniquely tranquil, dreamlike experience.

Mies’s Barcelona pavilion was so celebrated that, though it was dismantled after the exposition, Barcelona’s Urban Planning Department reconstructed it in the same location in 1986.



Catalogue page spread, **Mies van der Rohe**, 1947

Philip C. Johnson (American, 1906–2005), author
 Museum of Modern Art, New York City, publisher
 9⁷/₈ x 14⁷/₈ inches (25 x 38 centimeters), open
 The Wolfsonian–FIU, The Mitchell Wolfson, Jr. Collection,
 XC2003.01.4.28

Chicago 1933–34

Chicago staged the Century of Progress International Exposition on the centennial of the city's founding, eager to provide a local economic boost during the Great Depression and to improve its reputation after much-publicized gang violence. With civic and government funding unavailable, fair organizers turned to construction companies willing to build in return for a revenue share and to corporations eager to exhibit their products in fair pavilions.

In contrast to the classicist architecture of the "White City," erected in Chicago 40 years earlier for the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition, 20th-century fair planners used novel construction techniques, inexpensive materials, and colorful paints to create an easy-to-dismantle "Rainbow City." These Art Deco and Modernist skyscrapers and futuristic exhibition buildings created a mood of optimism in a time of economic distress.



Lamp, **A Century of Progress, Chicago: Travel and Transportation Building, 1933**

Painted metal, glass, felt

6 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches diameter (17.1 x 16.5 centimeters diameter)

The Wolfsonian-FIU, Gift of James and Martha Sweeny, 2017.6.77



Night light, **A Century of Progress, Chicago: Federal Building, c. 1934**

Painted metal, glass, paper

7 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 6 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches (19 x 17.1 x 11.4 centimeters)

The Wolfsonian-FIU, The Mitchell Wolfson, Jr Collection, 83.13.4

These lamps were designed as souvenirs for urban dwellers, most of whom had easy access to electricity by 1933. Visitors from more rural areas were astounded by the many electric lights and appliances showcased at the fair before President Franklin D. Roosevelt's Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) and Rural Electrification projects were able to bring power beyond the cities.



Photograph, **Federal Building World's Fair Chicago, 1933**

Kaufmann & Fabry Co., Chicago, photographer

Gelatin silver print

8 x 10 inches (20.3 x 25.4 centimeters)

The Wolfsonian-FIU, Gift of James and Martha Sweeny, 2018.4.26

The Federal Building, designed by Arthur Brown Jr. and Edward H. Bennett, housed government exhibits. A massive gold dome was surrounded by three white pylons representing the branches of federal government: executive, legislative, and judicial.



Photograph, ***Hall of Science World's Fair Chicago, 1933***
 Kaufmann & Fabry Co., Chicago, photographer
 Gelatin silver print
 8 x 10 inches (20.3 x 25.4 centimeters)
 The Wolfsonian—FIU, Gift of James and Martha Sweeny,
 2018.4.69

An imposing blue-and-white bell tower dominated the Hall of Science, designed by French architect Paul Cret. The building's combination of vertical elements and horizontal streamlining was a major influence on the 1930s Art Deco architecture of Miami Beach.



Photograph, ***Travel and Transport Building, Chicago, A Century of Progress International Exposition 1933, 1933***
 Gordon Coster (American, 1906–1988), Chicago, photographer
 Gelatin silver print
 10¹/₈ x 8 inches (25.7 x 20.3 centimeters)
 The Wolfsonian—FIU, The Mitchell Wolfson, Jr. Collection,
 86.21.1

The most innovative feature of the Travel and Transport Building—designed by Edward H. Bennett, Hubert Burnham, and John Holabird—was its "Breathing Dome." Avoiding the need for space-obstructing pillars or columns, a cable suspension system supported the circular dome from above. This daring design allowed the dome to expand and contract as temperature varied.



Poster, ***Chicago World's Fair. A Century of Progress, 1833–1933, c. 1933***
 Weimer Pursell (American, 1906–1974), designer
 Neely Printing Co., Chicago, printer
 Offset lithograph
 40⁵/₈ x 27¹/₈ inches (103.1 x 68.8 centimeters)
 The Wolfsonian—FIU, The Mitchell Wolfson, Jr Collection, 85.4.90

Weimer Pursell's poster emphasizes the striking color scheme (blue, white, and orange) of the Hall of Science. The building's bold palette was meant to accentuate the modern lines of the architecture and produce a sense of optimism.



Poster, **Chicago World's Fair: A Century of Progress, 1833–1933**, 1933

Weimer Pursell (American, 1906–1974), designer

Neely Printing Co., Chicago, printer

Offset lithograph

40 x 26¹/₈ inches (101.6 x 66.3 centimeters)

The Wolfsonian–FIU, The Mitchell Wolfson, Jr Collection, 85.4.91

Chicago World's Fair souvenirs and promotional products frequently featured the emblematic silhouette of the Federal Building, with its three white pillars towering above a golden dome.



Poster, **World's Fair – Chicago – A Century of Progress 1833–1933**, c. 1933

Glenn C. Sheffer (American, 1881–1948), designer

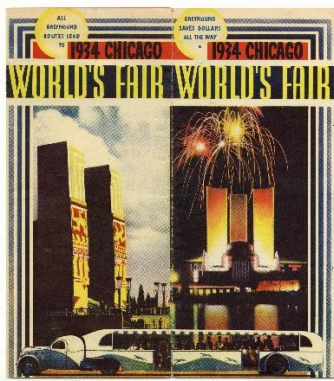
Goes Lithography Company, Chicago, printer

Offset lithograph

42 x 28 inches (106.6 x 71.1 centimeters)

The Wolfsonian–FIU, The Mitchell Wolfson, Jr Collection, 85.4.92

The central female figure of this poster stands on a globe against a vibrant background with skyscrapers, iconic pavilions, and airships. The imagery speaks to the fair's international scope and promotes its aerial attractions, which included the arrival of a squadron of 24 seaplanes from Italy.



Advertisement, **Greyhound Saves Dollars All the Way: 1934 Chicago World's Fair, 1934**

Thos. Cook & Son Wagons-Lits Inc., author

Greyhound Lines, Chicago, publisher

9 x 12¹/₄ inches (23 x 31 centimeters)

The Wolfsonian–FIU, The Mitchell Wolfson, Jr. Collection, 86.19.8



Toys, **A Century of Progress Chicago – 1933: Greyhound Lines, 1933**

General Motors Company, Detroit, manufacturer

Iron, paint, rubber

1³/₄ x 10¹/₄ x 2¹/₈ inches (4.4 x 26 x 5.3 centimeters)

The Wolfsonian–FIU, Gift of James and Martha Sweeny, 2017.6.71 a,b, .72 a,b



The Greyhound Bus Company created streamlined passenger vehicles for the fair. Designed by James J. St. Croix and manufactured by General Motors Company, the buses had a capacity of 100 passengers each. The fleet of 60 buses provided

transportation within the fairgrounds for nearly 40 million attendees. GM made these toys as take-home souvenirs.



Playing cards, **1934: A Century of Progress: 53 of the Latest Views**, 1934

Electrolite Products Co., Chicago, manufacturer
3⁷/₈ x 2³/₄ x 3³/₄ inches diameter (10 x 7 x 1.8 centimeters diameter)

The Wolfsonian–FIU, The Mitchell Wolfson, Jr. Collection, 86.19.75

Companies vied for the right to create and sell souvenirs officially sanctioned by the organizers of the Century of Progress International Exposition. One company produced decks of playing cards with a color illustration of the fair logo on the case and back of each card and photos of various pavilions and fairground views on the faces.



Postcard, **Italian Building**, 1933

Reuben H. Donnelley Corporation, Chicago, printer
3¹/₂ x 5¹/₂ inches (9 x 14 centimeters)

The Wolfsonian–FIU, The Mitchell Wolfson, Jr. Collection, XC1991.170.271

To draw attention to its technological and aviation achievements, Italy built a streamlined, airplane-shaped pavilion with rounded corners and a wing-like overhang above the entrance. The pavilion was designed by Rationalist architects Mario De Renzi, Adalberto Libera, and Antonio Valente. Rationalist architects introduced the principles of the Modern Movement in Italy, using simple forms and modular elements to prioritize function in their buildings.



Leaflet, **I Came . . I Saw . . I Was Amazed**, 1933

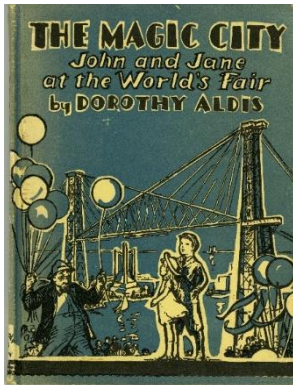
Servel Sales, Inc., Evansville, Indiana, publisher
8¹/₄ x 5¹/₂ inches (21 x 14 centimeters), closed
The Wolfsonian–FIU, Gift of James and Martha Sweeny, XC2017.01.2.272

The fair in Chicago was intended to impress Depression-weary visitors with a vision of a future made bright by labor-saving domestic products. New innovations for the home, such as electric washing machines, dishwashers, and air conditioners, along with the refrigerators promoted in this pamphlet, were marketed to women.



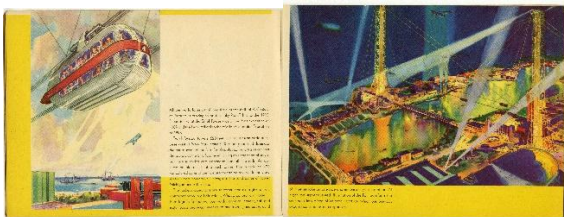
Magazine, *Official World's Fair Weekly*, June 17, 1933
Chicago
11³/₈ x 8⁵/₈ inches (29 x 22 centimeters)
The Wolfsonian—FIU, Gift of James and Martha Sweeny,
XC2017.01.2.211

Fairs were often promoted with weekly illustrated magazines. This issue produced for the Century of Progress International Exposition included a cover with airships, airplanes, and seaplanes—symbols of conquest of the skies, a major theme of the fair.



Book, *The Magic City: John & Jane at the World's Fair*, 1933
Margaret Freeman (American, 1893–1942), illustrator
Dorothy Aldis (American, 1896–1966), author
Minton, Balch & Company, New York City, publisher
8¹/₄ x 6¹/₄ inches (21 x 16 centimeters)
The Wolfsonian—FIU, Gift of James and Martha Sweeny,
XC2017.01.2.222

This children's book uses a cover illustration showing the popularity of the Sky Ride with younger fairgoers. Unaccompanied minors often snuck into the fair to enjoy its wonders, having discovered that fair officials often gave rides home to “lost” children at the end of each day.



Viewbook page spread, *Official View Book: A Century of Progress Exposition*, 1933
Kaufmann & Fabry Co., Chicago, photographers
Allen Diehl Albert (American, 1874–1964), author
The Reuben H. Donnelley Corporation, Chicago, publisher
9 x 24 inches (23 x 61 centimeters), open
The Wolfsonian—FIU, The Mitchell Wolfson, Jr. Collection,
86.19.9

Built by bridge engineering firm Robinson & Steinman, the Sky Ride attraction featured two 628-foot-tall observation towers. These were connected by suspension cables at 215 feet that conveyed rocket-shaped cable cars above the fairgrounds. Approximately 4.5 million passengers took the ride over the course of the fair, enjoying a preview of a future in which travel by airship would fall within the reach of the average American.



Pamphlet, ***Progress in Industrial Color and Protection at “A Century of Progress,”*** 1933

American Asphalt Paint Co., Chicago, publisher
10⁵/₈ x 15³/₄ inches (27 x 40 centimeters)

The Wolfsonian–FIU, The Mitchell Wolfson, Jr. Collection,
XX1990.366

This pamphlet illustrates the palette of 28 colors chosen to decorate individual buildings. It identifies Austrian American architect Joseph Urban as the coordinator of the color scheme.



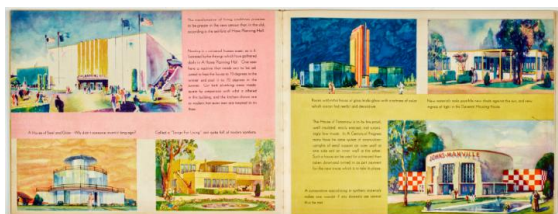
Chest, ***World's Fair Furniture line,*** 1933

Gilbert Rohde (American, 1884–1944), designer
Herman Miller Furniture Co., Zeeland, Michigan, manufacturer
Dark Castano wood, grey Harewood, sequoia burl veneers,
aluminum

44 x 34 x 21 inches (111.7 x 86.3 x 53.3 centimeters)

The Wolfsonian–FIU, Gift of Alex Disbrow, 2022.39.2

This chest was part of the master bedroom furniture suite in the Design for Living house, one of the 11 model homes displayed at the Chicago fair. Designer Gilbert Rohde collaborated with Herman Miller Furniture Company to bring a modern edge to the brand, producing a new line (dubbed *World's Fair Furniture*) marked by clean forms and a lack of surface adornment. Created for middle-class consumers, these products found broad appeal, even among traditionalist Americans who were skeptical of Modernism.



Viewbook page spread, ***Official View Book: A Century of Progress Exposition,*** 1933

Kaufmann & Fabry Co., Chicago, photographers
Allen Diehl Albert (American, 1874–1964), author
The Reuben H. Donnelley Corporation, Chicago, publisher
9 x 24³/₈ inches (23 x 62 centimeters)

The Wolfsonian–FIU, Gift of James and Martha Sweeny,
XC2017.01.2.307

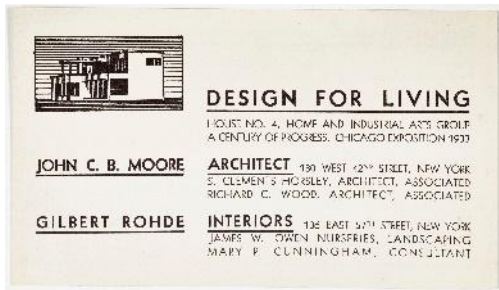
Six model homes, including the Design for Living house, are illustrated in this souvenir booklet.

Left page

Top Home Planning Hall
Bottom left House of Tomorrow
Bottom right Design for Living House

Right page

Top left Owens-Illinois Glass-Block Building
Top right General Houses Inc. Steel House
Bottom Johns-Mansville Building



Leaflet, *Design for Living: House No. 4: Home and Industrial Arts Group: A Century of Progress Exposition 1933*, 1933

John C. B. Moore (American, 1897–1993), architect
Gilbert Rohde (American, 1884–1944), interior designer
4 x 7 inches (10.1 x 17.7 centimeters)

The Wolfsonian–FIU, The Mitchell Wolfson, Jr. Collection,
TD1990.188.1

The Home and Industrial Arts Group exhibition of 11 full-sized experimental homes at the Chicago World's Fair featured modern architecture and new technologies. House no. 4 was based on a system of standard units, reducing building costs. For marketing purposes, the house was renamed Design for Living after Noël Coward's successful Broadway play, which featured Gilbert Rohde furniture in the set design.

New York 1939–40

Corporations such as General Motors, General Electric, Heinz, and Ford dominated the vision for the 1939–40 New York World's Fair, themed "Building the World of Tomorrow." Organized during the Great Depression amidst fears of a new world war, the fair offered a glimpse of a future in which democracy prevailed and prosperous Americans lived and drove in orderly cities or commuted to them on highways from green suburbs.

The Trylon and Perisphere, a triangular obelisk and colossal sphere, stood at the fair's center and served as its logo. Giant exhibition dioramas inside the Perisphere and the General Motors pavilion promised visitors a brighter tomorrow.



Model, ***Trylon and Perisphere***, c. 1938

For the 1939 New York World's Fair

Wallace K. Harrison (American, 1895–1981) and Jacques André Fouilhoux (French, 1879–1945) of Harrison & Fouilhoux, New York City, architects

Stainless steel, plastic, wood

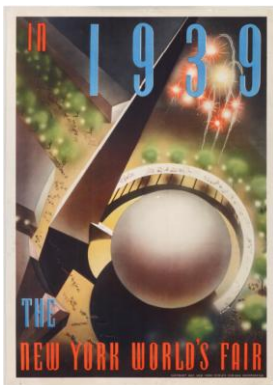
36¹/₄ x 31 inches diameter (92 x 78.7 centimeters diameter)

The Wolfsonian–FIU, The Mitchell Wolfson, Jr. Collection, 86.17.1

The 1939 New York World's Fair imagined the "World of Tomorrow" packed with technologically advanced consumer products and daring architecture. The Trylon and Perisphere, the fair's centerpieces and its logo, captured this optimistic spirit. To promote the fair, 49 stainless-steel models of the structures were produced and mounted atop General Motors limousines that toured the country.



Cross country motorcade, May 2, 1938.
From *Dawn of a New Day: The New York World's Fair, 1939/40*, 1980. Queens Museum, publisher. Courtesy Peter M. Warner.



Poster, ***In 1939: The New York World's Fair***, 1937

Nembhard N. Culin (American, 1908–1990), designer

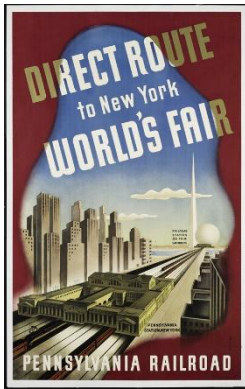
New York World's Fair Inc., New York City, publisher

Offset lithograph

39³/₄ x 28 inches (100.9 x 71.1 centimeters)

The Wolfsonian–FIU, The Mitchell Wolfson, Jr Collection, 85.4.72

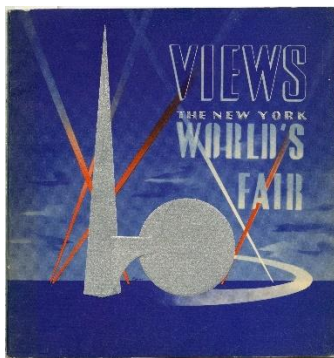
This poster offers a bird's-eye view at night of visitors lining up to see the Trylon and Perisphere. Published two years before the fair, it was designed by Nembhard N. Culin, an architect who worked with Frost, Frost & Fenner, the firm responsible for the Textile Building.



Poster, ***Direct Route to New York World's Fair – Pennsylvania Railroad***, 1939

Sascha A. Maurer (American, b. Germany, 1897–1961), designer
 Pennsylvania Railroad Company, Philadelphia, publisher
 Offset lithograph
 40⁵/₈ x 25¹/₄ inches (103.1 x 64.1 centimeters)
 The Wolfsonian–FIU, The Mitchell Wolfson, Jr Collection,
 TD1989.19.9

At the time of this poster's publication, the Pennsylvania Railroad Company operated the nation's largest electrified railroad system. The New York World's Fair was an opportunity to use technological advancement as a selling point for their "Fleet of Modernism"—railways with direct routes to the fair.



Catalog, ***Views: The New York World's Fair***, 1939

Mark Freeman (American, b. Austro-Hungarian Empire, 1908–2003),
 illustrator
 Grinnell Lithographic Corporation, New York, publisher
 11³/₄ x 11³/₈ inches (30 x 29 centimeters)
 The Wolfsonian–FIU, Gift of Charles L. Marshall, Jr. and Richard L.
 Tooke, XC2010.04.4.15



Program, ***Your World of Tomorrow***, 1939

Leslie Darrell Ragan (American, 1897–1972), cover illustrator
 Gilbert Vivian Seldes, (American, 1893–1970), author
 Rogers-Kellogg-Stillson, New York City, publisher
 11³/₄ x 17³/₄ inches (30 x 45 centimeters), open
 The Wolfsonian–FIU, The Mitchell Wolfson, Jr. Collection, 86.19.57

The Tylon and Perisphere were the central structures of the 1939 New York World's Fair. Visitors were encouraged to ascend the giant sphere along a wraparound walkway to look down upon a diorama representing Democracy, an imagined futurescape shaped by peaceful commerce rather than the aggression associated with Fascist regimes. Designed by Henry Dreyfuss, the diorama envisioned a well-regulated utopian city of tomorrow: with pedestrian-free, high-speed roadways connecting to green suburbs.



Booklet, ***Futurama***, 1940

General Motors Corporation, Detroit, publisher
 7 x 8¹/₄ inches (18 x 21 centimeters), closed
 The Wolfsonian-FIU, The Mitchell Wolfson, Jr. Collection,
 XB1992.1640

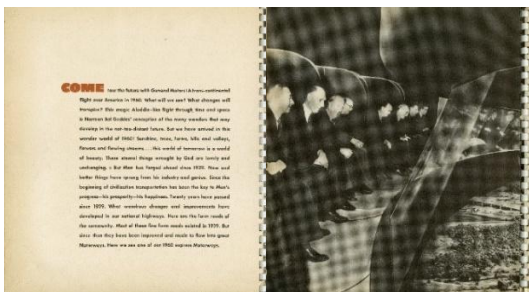
Norman Bel Geddes's design of the Futurama exhibit for General Motors fused architecture and theater. The exterior was coated with a silver-gray gloss paint to highlight the building's curved forms and to reflect the surrounding landscape. Inside, the audience was transported over a huge model of an egalitarian America in 1960 (with automobiles for all!), complete with highways bisecting cities and weaving through mountains and valleys.



Postcard, ***Scene from the General Motors Futurama: New York World's Fair, 1939***

General Motors Corporation, Detroit, Michigan, publisher
 3¹/₂ x 5¹/₂ inches (9 x 14 centimeters)
 The Wolfsonian-FIU, The Mitchell Wolfson, Jr. Collection,
 XC1991.170.532

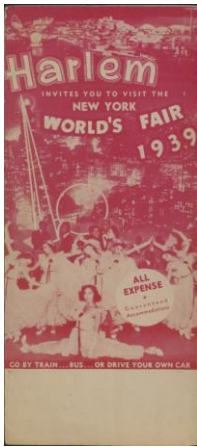
In Norman Bel Geddes's futuristic model city (shown on this postcard), his solution for eliminating traffic congestion and accidents was to create separate levels for pedestrian sidewalks. Some of the diorama's streamlined buildings were even equipped with flat rooftop platforms to accommodate individual flying vehicles.



Book page spread, ***Futurama***, 1939

General Motors Corporation, Detroit, Michigan, publisher
 12¹/₄ x 21¹/₄ inches (31 x 54 centimeters), open
 The Wolfsonian-FIU, The Mitchell Wolfson, Jr. Collection, 83.2.19

General Motors's Futurama exhibit placed spectators on seats attached to a 1/3-mile-long conveyor belt snaking its way above a gigantic model city, simulating the view of a low-flying airship. The audience listened to a synchronized narrative soundtrack describing this utopia 20 years into the future. The gigantic diorama included 500,000 buildings and 50,000 remote-controlled vehicles that moved along multi-lane highways leading from garden city suburbs to urban centers.



Leaflet, *Harlem Invites You to Visit the New York World's Fair*, 1939
 Harlem "Hospitality" Tours, New York City, publisher
 9 x 3⁷/₈ inches (23 x 10 centimeters)
 The Wolfsonian–FIU, Purchase, with funds donated by Mitchell Wolfson, Jr., XC2024.03.1.1

This advertisement aimed at an African American audience offered various itineraries, access to the Lido Recreation Center pool, and endorsements from the New York Urban League and Heavyweight Champion of the World, Joe Louis. Eugene V. Roundtree, a Pullman porter turned real estate agent and entrepreneur, operated Harlem "Hospitality" Tours. Roundtree's real estate investments gradually made him the largest Black property owner in Boston.



Maquette, *The Threatening Shadow*, c. 1938
 For the 1939 New York World's Fair (never executed)
 Alfonso Iannelli (American, b. Italy, 1888–1965)
 Chicago
 Plaster, paint
 11¹/₄ x 17 x 16 inches (28.5 x 43.1 x 40.6 centimeters)
 The Wolfsonian–FIU, The Mitchell Wolfson, Jr. Collection, 83.6.2

Though the tone of the 1939 New York World's Fair was optimistic, some artists and designers refused to ignore troubling developments in Europe. Alfonso Iannelli proposed building a large-scale sculpture—a sunshade made by fascist salutes—that warned of authoritarian aggression. Fair organizers rejected his proposal.



Study, *Speed*, c. 1939
 Mark Freeman (American, b. Austria-Hungary, 1908–2003)
 Watercolor, graphite, and gouache on paper
 13³/₈ x 16¹/₈ inches (33.9 x 40.9 centimeters)
 The Wolfsonian–FIU, The Mitchell Wolfson, Jr. Collection, XX1990.2333

The artist Mark Freeman, whose work chronicled the changing architecture of New York City, documented several structures at the fair. This airbrushed gouache, one of his illustrations for the catalog *Views: The New York World's Fair*, represents Joseph Reiner's sculpture, *Speed*, in the Court of Communications. The streamlined shapes of the female figure riding a winged horse allude to the swiftness of modern communication.

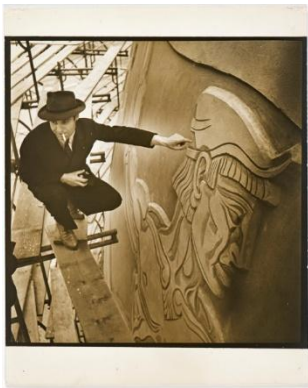


Catalog spread, **Views: The New York World's Fair, 1939**
 Mark Freeman (American, b. Austro-Hungarian Empire, 1908–2003),
 illustrator
 Grinnell Lithographic Corporation, New York City, publisher
 11³/₄ x 22³/₈ inches (30 x 57 centimeters), open
 The Wolfsonian–FIU, The Mitchell Wolfson, Jr. Collection,
 XB2005.12.12.1



Photograph, **Raymond Granville Barger Sitting in the Hand of the Goddess of Perfection, c. 1939**
 Louis H. Dreyer (dates unknown), photographer
 Raymond Granville Barger (American, 1906–2001), sculptor
 Gelatin silver print
 10 x 8¹/₂ inches (25.4 x 21.6 centimeters)
 The Wolfsonian–FIU, The Mitchell Wolfson, Jr. Collection, 84.21.5

Inside the Heinz Pavilion stood a 65-foot-tall sculpture, *Goddess of Perfection*, by Raymond Barger.



Photograph, **Domenico Mortellito Puts the Finishing Touches on His Mural for the Heinz Pavilion, 1939**
 Gene Fenn (American, 1911–2001), photographer
 10 x 8 inches (25.4 x 20.3 centimeters)
 The Wolfsonian–FIU, The Mitchell Wolfson, Jr. Collection, 86.21.33

Italian American muralist Domenico Mortellito created this bas relief, *Harvest – Occidental and Oriental*, to represent global agricultural scenes on the Heinz Dome's exterior.



Television, **RCA Victor TRK 12, 1939**
 John Vassos (American, b. Romania, 1898–1985), designer
 RCA Manufacturing Company, Inc., Camden, New Jersey,
 manufacturer
 Walnut, beech and ebonized veneer, Bakelite, glass, metal
 40 x 34 x 20¹/₂ inches (101.6 x 86.3 x 20.5 centimeters)
 The Wolfsonian–FIU, Purchase, Visionaries Acquisition Fund, 2012.6.1

RCA unveiled its first consumer television sets at the New York World's Fair. The *TRK 12* was designed by John Vassos, who established the design department at RCA in 1933. As coordinator for the company's corporate image, he also designed the theme and concept of the fair's RCA pavilion. Like his RCA radios, Vassos's television design merged functionality, streamlining, and a familiar form to make it—when not in use—an agreeable piece of furniture rather than just a mechanism.

President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's speech opening the fair was broadcast live, making him the first president to appear on television.



Scan to watch President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's speech at the opening of the 1939 New York World's Fair



Leaflet interior, **57 Heinz: Heinz Exhibit, 1939 New York World's Fair, 1939**

H. J. Heinz Company, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, publisher
7 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 10 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches (19 x 26 centimeters), open

The Wolfsonian-FIU, Gift of Henry Rosenberg, XC2011.11.1.14

Because the company was not allowed to build a pickle-shaped pavilion, Heinz settled on a dome design by New York architects Leonard Schultze and Archibald M. Brown.



Pin, **Heinz, 1939**

H. J. Heinz Company, Pittsburgh, manufacturer
Gutta-percha plastic, brass

1 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches (3.1 centimeters)

The Wolfsonian-FIU, Gift of Stuart Slieces, 1998.10.1

Heinz's most successful giveaway to fairgoers was a plastic pin in the shape of a pickle, one of the brand's most famous products.



Brochure spread, **To and Through New York World's Fair: Where to Go and What to See by Greyhound, 1939**

Greyhound Corporation, Chicago, publisher
9 x 16 $\frac{1}{8}$ inches (23 x 41 centimeters)

The Wolfsonian-FIU, Gift of Francis Xavier Luca & Clara Helena Palacio Luca, XC2016.12.1.5

The New York World's Fair presented aerodynamic sculptures as well as gigantic dioramas for audiences to peer down upon. The Midway (or amusement section) offered rides such as one that simulated a parachute jump.

Brussels 1958

After a hiatus during the Second World War, world's fairs resumed with an agenda of reassurance. Expo 58 (Exposition Universelle et Internationale de Bruxelles) centered around peaceful uses for nuclear energy, reframing the potential of the atomic bomb even in the wake of Hiroshima and Nagasaki's destruction and amidst the context of a brewing Cold War arms race. A structure inspired by the atom, the Atomium, dominated the fair and served as a symbol of scientific achievement and potential utopian progress.

Though the fair proclaimed renewed peace among nations, Cold War tensions were tangible at the foot of the Atomium, where the Soviet and the United States pavilions faced off. The Russians placed Sputnik, the first satellite in space, in the center of their building to boast of the achievements of their communist society; the U.S. pavilion promoted the "American dream" and the comforts of life produced by capitalist consumerism.



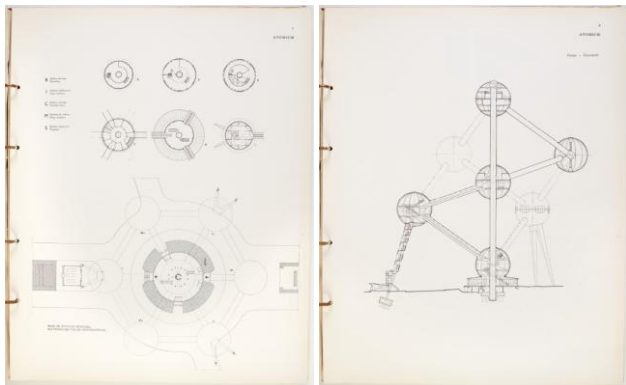
Souvenir, **Atomium Bruxelles 1958**, 1958

Ets. Rigaux & Co. S.A., Brussels, manufacturer

Metal alloy, marble

5 x 3¹/₄ inches (12.7 x 8.3 centimeters)

The Wolfsonian-FIU, Gift of Silvia Barisione, 2025.13.2



Plans, "**Plans du Pavillon d'Accueil (Reception Pavilion Plans)**," from *Plans: Exposition universelle et internationale de Bruxelles*, 1958

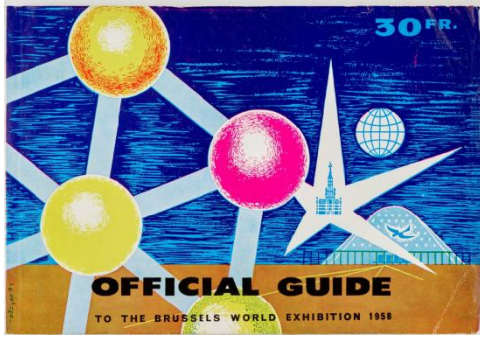
Exposition universelle et internationale de Bruxelles, Brussels, publisher

19³/₄ x 15³/₄ inches (50 x 40 centimeters)

The Wolfsonian-FIU, The Mitchell Wolfson, Jr. Collection, XB1990.2291

Designed by engineer André Waterkeyn and architects André and Jean Polak, the Atomium consists of 9 stainless steel-clad spheres connected to resemble a unit cell of an iron crystal enlarged 165 billion times.

The Atomium has been restored and reopened to the public in 2006.



Guidebook, **Official Guide to the Brussels World Exhibition**, 1958

F. G. De Tiege (Belgian), cover illustrator
 Desclée & Co., Tournai, Belgium, publisher
 5¹/₂ x 7⁷/₈ inches (14 x 20 centimeters)
 The Wolfsonian-FIU, Gift of James and Martha Sweeny,
 XC2017.01.2.106

The cover of the Expo 58 official guide presents a partial view of the Atomium—graphically rendered in bright colors—and the fair’s logo, an off-center, 5-pointed star. Conceived by Belgian graphic designer Lucien de Roeck, the star logo symbolizes the 5 continents converging on the Brussels City Hall tower. The distorted shape of the star suggests the dynamism of the fair, and the addition of the globe alludes to universality. In the background stands Palais 5, the 1935 exhibition hall covered with a triangular structure designed by architect Jacques Depuis for Expo 58.



Postcard, **Atomium**, 1958

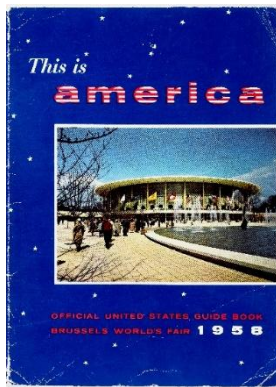
Editions BEATIC, Brussels, publisher
 6 x 3 inches (15 x 10 centimeters)
 The Wolfsonian-FIU, Gift of Michele Oka Doner,
 XC1994.4524



Magazine, **Paris Match, Special Expo 58 Bruxelles**, May–October 1958

35³/₄ x 10⁵/₈ inches (35 x 27 centimeters)
 The Wolfsonian-FIU, Gift of James and Martha Sweeny,
 XC2017.6.237

The Atomium dominated the Expo 58 fairgrounds in Brussels and served as an emblem of the exposition. Only 6 spheres were open to the public—a practical decision for optimizing visitor circulation—with 4 of them containing an exhibition highlighting peaceful uses of atomic energy. Belgian architect Stanislas Jasinski created a 250-seat restaurant in the top sphere.



Guidebook, ***This Is America: Official United States Guide Book, Brussels World's Fair 1958***, 1958
 Office of the United States Commissioner General, Brussels World's Fair 1958 and Manhattan Publishing Company, New York, publishers
 9⁷/₈ x 7 inches (25 x 18 centimeters)
 The Wolfsonian–FIU, Purchase, XC2014.04.6.27

Designed by Edward Durrell Stone, the United States pavilion was shaped as a translucent drum sheltered by a cable-supported roof that made it one of the largest column-free spaces in the world. Inside, it fostered the idea of a future in which people's lives were made infinitely better by the corporate production of laborsaving consumer goods.



Plan, ***Pavilion of the U.S.S.R.: A Guide***, 1958
 Vneshtorgizdat (All-Union Foreign Trade Publishing House), Moscow, publisher
 11³/₈ x 4³/₈ inches (29 x 11 centimeters)
 The Wolfsonian–FIU, Gift of Michele Oka Doner, XC1994.4507

At the height of the Cold War and Space Race, the Soviet pavilion at Expo 58 touted the nation's position with displays of prototypes for Sputnik (the first man-made satellite to be successfully launched into orbit, in 1957) and a model of the ship *Lenin*, the world's first nuclear-powered icebreaker



Advertisement, ***U.S.S.R. Section, Brussels Universal and International Exhibition***, 1958
 Vneshtorgizdat (All-Union Foreign Trade Publishing House), Moscow, publisher
 8⁵/₈ x 9³/₈ inches (22 x 24 centimeters), open
 The Wolfsonian–FIU, Purchase, XC2014.04.6.26

Brochures published for free distribution in the Soviet pavilion praised improvements in public welfare and leisure in their "worker's paradise" achieved through public education, social programs, electrification, and scientific breakthroughs.

New York, 1964–65

Twenty-five years after the 1939 world's fair, New York hosted another on the same site, this time trumpeting the theme "Peace Through Understanding." Despite the message of unity—shaped in response to the turbulence of the Civil Rights protests and presidential assassination—the 1964–65 New York World's Fair had a particularly corporate feel. It was organized by a group of businessmen, with nearly 350 American corporations exhibiting alongside 80 nations and 24 of the 50 U.S. states.

At the fair's center stood its symbol, the stainless-steel Unisphere. Other pavilions adopted Space Age designs to complement displays of new technologies like jet packs, thermonuclear fusion power plants, and a Space Park section touting rockets designed to usher in the late John F. Kennedy's "New Frontier." The exhibition of consumer products, including RCA color televisions, AT&T Picturephones, and IBM computers, reflected the commercial bent of the fair.



Souvenir, *Unisphere*, 1964

United States Steel, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, manufacturer

New York World's Fair 1964–65 Corporation, commissioner

Steel, metal alloy, wood, plastic

3 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 4 inches diameter (8.9 x 10.1 centimeters diameter)

Courtesy Marc Levin

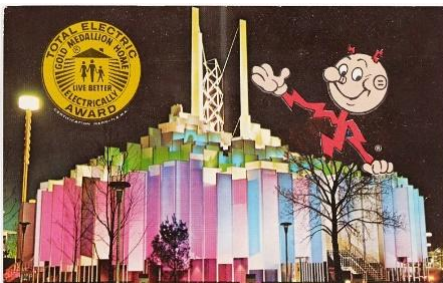


Leaflet interior spread, *If You've Only Seen It Once, You Haven't Seen It All*, 1965

General Motors Futurama, New York City, publisher

9 x 8 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches (23 x 21 centimeters), open

The Wolfsonian–FIU, Gift of James and Martha Sweeny, XC2017.01.2.96



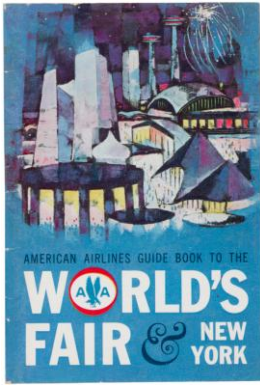
Postcard, *Tower of light, New York World's Fair*, 1964–65

New York World's Fair 1964–1965 Corporation, New York City, publisher

3 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches (9 x 14 centimeters)

The Wolfsonian–FIU, The Mitchell Wolfson, Jr. Collection, XC1996.2

Cartoon character Reddy Kilowatt, a trademarked corporate spokesman for electrical utility companies, introduced the brilliant Tower of Light display and a Total Electric Gold Medallion Home to fair visitors.



Guidebook, *American Airlines Guide Book to the World's Fair & New York*, 1964

William Kasso (American, 1915–2002), cover illustrator
American Airlines and Cliff Productions, publisher
6 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches (16 centimeters)

The Wolfsonian–FIU, Gift of Mark L. Yates and Boris Dorfman, XC2025.05.1.1



Souvenir, *New York World's Fair 1964–1965*, 1965

Made in Japan for United States Steel

Chromed pot metal

1 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 5 x 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches (4.4 x 12.7 x 3.8 centimeters)

The Wolfsonian–FIU, Gift of Silvia Barisione, 2025.13.1

The Unisphere is the central piece of this souvenir made of pot metal, an alloy of low-melting point metals, ideal for making fast and cheap castings.



Medallion, *New York World's Fair. Man's Achievements in an Expanding Universe*, 1964

Medallic Art Co., New York City, maker

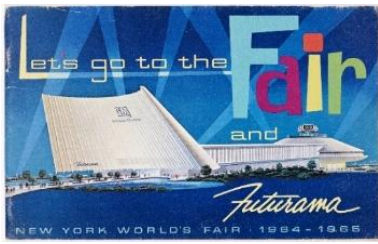
Bronze

1 $\frac{1}{8}$ x 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches (0.3 x 6.3 centimeters)

The Wolfsonian–FIU, Purchase, 2022.7.107

This medallion depicts the Unisphere and, on its reverse, a Dutch colonizer next to an American Indian celebrating the 300th anniversary of the founding New York City, in 1664.

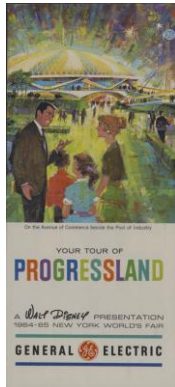




Pamphlet cover and spread, **Let's Go to the Fair and Futurama: New York World's Fair, 1964–1965**, c. 1964
 General Motors Corporation, Detroit, Michigan, publisher
 5½ x 8⅝ inches (14 x 22 centimeters), closed;
 5½ x 17 inches (14 x 43 centimeters), open
 The Wolfsonian–FIU, The Mitchell Wolfson, Jr. Collection,
 XB1991.830; Gift of James and Martha Sweeny,
 XC2017.01.2.311



General Motors reprised its Futurama Pavilion from the 1939–40 New York World's Fair with an identically titled successor in 1964–65. The new Futurama exhibit used moving theater seats to convey visitors to a futuristic world of technological wonders and space travel before depositing them into an automotive showroom featuring contemporary and futuristic vehicles.



Leaflet, **Your Tour of Progressland: A Walt Disney Presentation, 1964–65**, 1963
 Walt Disney Productions, Burbank, California, and
 General Electric, Schenectady, New York, publisher
 9½ x 4⅜ inches (24 x 11 centimeters)
 The Wolfsonian–FIU, Gift of Francis Xavier Luca & Clara
 Helena Palacio Luca, XC2016.12.2

Animation artist and theme park entrepreneur Walt Disney produced exhibits for four different pavilions. His innovations included groundbreaking animatronic displays as Great Moments with Abraham Lincoln, General Electric's Carousel of Progress, Ford Motor Company's Magic Skyway, and the premiere of the It's a Small World ride, for the Pepsi Cola Company. Disney's Progressland served as a model for EPCOT (Experimental Prototype Community of Tomorrow), a planned community that would be realized in the 1970s and '80s as part of his Florida-based theme park.



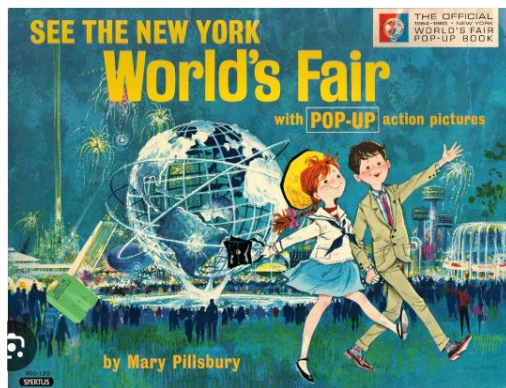
Brochure, **Official Preview: New York World's Fair, 1964/1965**, 1963
 Whitney Darrow, Jr. (American, 1909–1999), illustrator
 Time-Life Books, New York City, publisher
 11 x 8¼ inches (28 x 21 centimeters)
 The Wolfsonian–FIU, The Mitchell Wolfson, Jr. Collection,
 XB2024.12.2.1

This brochure, included in an opening day press kit, pictures an excited young boy leading his family into the spectacular fairgrounds.

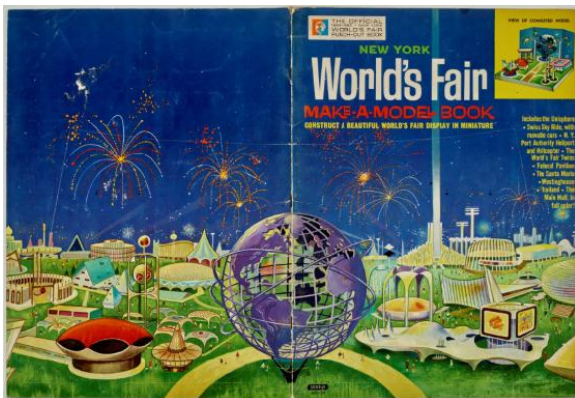


Leaflet, ***World's Fair. New York World's Fair 1964–65***
 W. David Shaw (American, 1916–2005), illustrator
 New York World's Fair 1964–1965 Corporation, publisher
 9 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 3 $\frac{7}{8}$ inches (24 x 10 centimeters)
 The Wolfsonian–FIU, Gift of James and Martha Sweeny,
 XC2017.01.2.100

The stainless-steel Unisphere, designed by landscape architect Gilmore D. Clarke and built by American Bridge Company, a division of United States Steel, celebrated the beginning of the Space Age. The three rings encircling the Unisphere represent the orbits of Yuri Gagarin (the first man in space), John Glenn (the first American to orbit the earth), and Telstar (the first active communications satellite). The structure survives in its original location.



Children's book, ***Peter and Wendy See the New York World's Fair in Pop-Up Action Pictures***, 1963
 Fred Ottenheimer (American, b. Germany, 1924–1999), illustrator
 Mary Pillsbury, author
 Spertus Publishing Company, New York City, publisher
 8 $\frac{5}{8}$ x 11 inches (22 x 28 centimeters)
 The Wolfsonian–FIU, XC1996.1



Children's book, ***New York World's Fair: Make-A-Model Book: Construct a Beautiful World's Fair Display in Miniature***, 1963
 Barry Martin Associates, Inc., Rumson, New York, designer
 Spertus Publishing Company, New York City, publisher
 General Offset Printing Company, Inc., Springfield, Massachusetts, printer
 14 x 20 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 12 inches (35.5 x 52 x 30.4 centimeters)
 The Wolfsonian–FIU, Long-term loan, The Mitchell Wolfson, Jr. Private Collection, XM1999.106.1

Montréal 1967

The Universal and International Exposition, or Expo67, was held in Montréal, Quebec, to celebrate Canada's centennial. The chosen theme, "Man and His World"—derived from the book *Terre des Hommes*, by French author, poet, and aviator Antoine de Saint-Exupéry—reflected on the relationships between humankind and technology, society, and the environment.

Habitat 67, a modular housing complex designed for the fair by Israeli Canadian architect Moshe Safdie, has survived and been designated a heritage monument by the government of Quebec. Architects Buckminster Fuller and Shoji Sadao also created a 250-foot-diameter geodesic dome, which served as the United States pavilion and housed an interactive environmental exhibit; the dome was preserved and now functions as an attraction called the Biosphere.



Album, *Man and His World*, 1963

Canadian Corporation for the 1967 World Exhibition, publisher

8⁵/₈ x 10⁵/₈ inches (22 x 27 centimeters)

The Wolfsonian-FIU, Gift of James and Martha Sweeny, XC2017.01.2.186

This cover features the Man in the Community pavilion, designed by Vancouver architects Arthur Erickson and Geoffrey Massey and made of wood from the Pacific Coast of Canada. Next to the title is Quebec designer Julien Hébert's official logo for the fair. It consists of 8 identical groups of twin figures representing humankind, united in solidarity and encircling the world.



Ashtray, *Expo67 Montréal*, 1967

Ornamin by Ornamold, Montréal, manufacturer
Melamine

7 inches (17.7 centimeters)

Courtesy Silvia Barisione

This souvenir ashtray illustrates the national pavilions representing the Soviet Union, France, the United States (the geodesic dome), Canada, and Great Britain.



Postcard, *Expo67, Montréal, Canada, Habitat 67*, 1967

Benjamin News Co. Ltd., Montréal, publisher

3¹/₂ x 5¹/₂ inches (8.8 x 14 centimeters)

Courtesy Silvia Barisione

This Expo 67 official postcard illustrates Habitat 67, designed by Israeli Canadian architect Moshe Safdie as a modular housing complex that provided a landscaped garden terrace for each of its 158 dwellings. Several apartments have since been combined to create larger units.



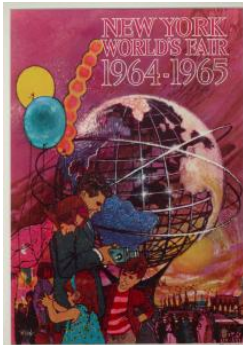
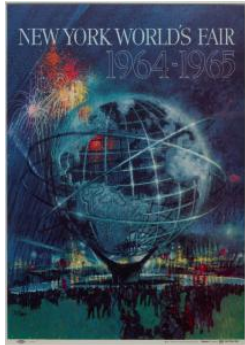
Book, **Montréal Canada Expo67: Album Souvenir Book**, 1967

Benjamin News Co., Montréal, publisher

10¹/₄ x 7 inches (26 x 18 centimeters)

The Wolfsonian-FIU, Gift of James and Martha Sweeny, XC2017.01.2.217

Architects Rod Robbie, Colin Vaughan, Paul Schoeler, and Matt Stankiewicz designed the Canadian Pavilion featured on the cover of this souvenir book. Katimavik—the huge, inverted pyramid dominating the building—takes its name from the Inuit word for “gathering place.”



Posters, **New York World's Fair 1964–1965**, c. 1964

Bob Peak (American, 1927–1992), designer

United States Steel, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and New York World's Fair 1964–1965 Corporation, New York City, publishers

Amalgamated Lithographers of America, New York City, printer

Offset lithograph



Posters, **Come Back to the Fair, New York World's Fair**, c. 1965

United States Steel, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and New York World's Fair 1964–1965 Corporation, New York City, publishers

Allied Printing, Philadelphia, printer

Offset lithograph

The Wolfsonian-FIU, Gifts of Mark L. Yates and Boris Dorfman, 2025.21.1–4

Spokane 1974

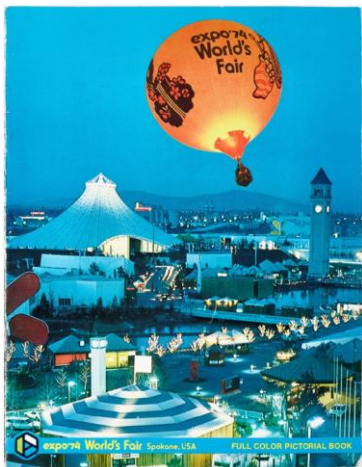
On the heels of the energy crisis, pollution concerns, and the 1970 Earth Day demonstration, the city of Spokane, Washington, organized the International Exposition on the Environment, or Expo '74, an environmentally conscious exposition with the motto "Man and Nature: One and Indivisible."

The smallest city to host a world's fair, Spokane used this opportunity to revitalize its depressed downtown district, demolishing the Great Northern Railroad Depot and creating Riverfront Park. The United States pavilion, the largest structure of the fair, integrated nature and structure under a giant tent, with grass and trees on the inside.



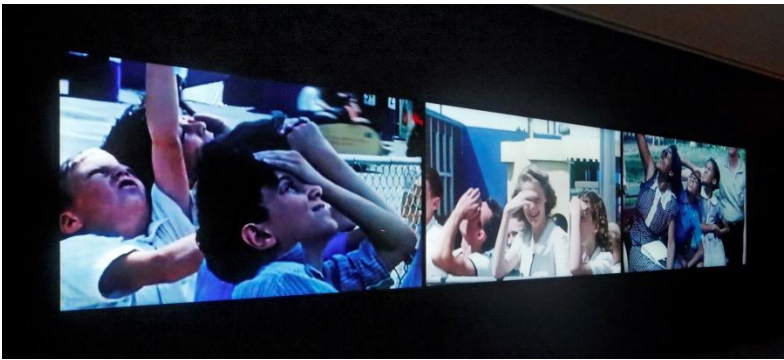
Book page spread, **Expo '74 World's Fair Spokane**, 1974
Dawn Bowers (American, 1924–1987), author
Expo '74 Corp., Spokane, publisher
9⁷/₈ x 18⁷/₈ inches (38 x 48 centimeters), open
The Wolfsonian–FIU, Gift of Jean S. and Frederic A. Sharf,
XC2017.11.3.122

The centerpiece of the fair was the United States pavilion, conceived by Seattle architects NBBJ (Naramore, Bain, Brady & Johanson) as a large steel-cable tensile structure. Within it, the first-ever IMAX movie, *Man Belongs to the Earth*, was shown. After the expo ended, the skeleton of the tent was stripped of its vinyl cover and deteriorated. In 2024 NAC Architecture repurposed the pavilion as a multifunctional outdoor venue, revitalizing Riverfront Park once again.



Pamphlet, **Expo '74 World's Fair, Spokane, USA**, 1974
Mike Roberts Color Productions, Berkeley, California,
photographer
Seville Enterprises, Inc., Miami, publisher
11 x 8⁵/₈ inches (28 x 22 centimeters)
The Wolfsonian–FIU, Gift of Francis Xavier Luca, XC2008.01.15

Near the United States pavilion stands the 1902 Great Northern Clocktower, one of the few structures of the Great Northern Railroad Depot that wasn't demolished before the fair. In this night image, there is barely a trace of Riverfront Park's industrial past. The organizers of Expo '74, led by executive architect Thomas Adkison, transformed the area into a vibrant community hub that served as a modern image of Spokane.



World's Fairs Footage

World's fairs are among history's most documented events, often using the era's latest technology. Before the invention of motion pictures, photographs captured every angle of the 1889 Paris Exposition. Later fairs, like Barcelona, fully embraced film; official newsreels showcased construction and grander spectacles, centering attention on fair highlights. By the 1930s, portable cameras entered the market—and with them, an explosion of home movies. The amateur footage often captured side attractions and attendees' more intimate moments, providing insight into the on-the-ground experience of fairs in Chicago, New York, Brussels, Montréal, and Spokane.

This video of historic photographs and film clips presents the many perspectives of fairgoers over a century of international expositions.

Video by Christopher Lopez

Credits

Paris 1889 | *La Tour* (1928) by René Clair; Eiffel Tower construction timelapse photographs by Louis-Émile Durandelle; films of the Eiffel Tower by Thomas Edison (c. 1900); anonymous photographs and map from the fair

Barcelona 1929 | Expo 1929 and construction newsreels; nighttime photographs by Gabriel Casas; German pavilion footage of the building's 1986 reconstruction

Chicago 1933–34 | Amateur footage from the Ferd Isserman Collection at Chicago Film Archives

New York 1939 | Amateur footage by Philip Medicus and Gustave Martens; amateur and newsreel footage; *The Middleton Family at the New York World's Fair*, official promotional film by Westinghouse

Brussels 1958 | Expo 58 color film preserved by the International Institute for the Conservation, Archiving and Distribution of Other People's Memories (IICADOM)

New York 1964 | *To the Fair!*, official promotional film; amateur footage from archive.org

Montréal 1967 | Amateur footage by Peter A. Leavens

Spokane 1974 | *Man Belongs to the Earth*, IMAX film created for the U.S.; Expo '74 World's Fair, official promotional film



COMING SOON

Marco Brambilla: After Utopia

This short documentary shows how artist Marco Brambilla was informed by our collection to create *After Utopia*, a video piece featuring surreal dreamscapes using images from past and present world's fairs. Brambilla collaborated with chief curator Silvia Barisione and chief librarian Frank Luca starting in late 2023, identifying materials from fairs represented in the collection to incorporate their visuals into his work. His process combines artificial intelligence (AI), computer graphics (CG), and handmade animations.

A previous iteration of this project, titled *Approximations of Utopia*, was part of the Times Square Arts Midnight Moment program in June 2024. Three new videos will be presented here for Art Basel 2025.

Documentary by Christopher Lopez