

T H E E P H E M E R A L C I T Y

Paris and the Phenomenon of the Universal Expositions

by

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THE EPHEMERAL CITY

Paris and the Phenomenon of the Universal Exhibitions

by
Elizabeth Cordoliani

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ABSTRACT

1989! To the French men, it already evokes thoughts of the Universal Exposition that will take place in Paris that year. This great festival will be the first one since World War II, more than half a century ago. At last, Paris seems to resume with an old tradition which was in a fair way to disappear.

In the light of such a sudden revival, this paper proposes to examine the phenomenon of the Universal Expositions. Indeed, the occurrence and the inherent debates it induces during its planning stages raise many issues of various types. Some will be discussed within the framework of three different selected THEMES, aiming at covering what I think are the main aspects of the phenomenon over time.

These THEMES will deal respectively with the role and the hidden goals of an Exposition (1), with its festive dimension as well as its physical and social impacts on the city (2), and finally with the sense of time given by an Exposition (3). Reflections about the Universal Exposition of 1989 (4) will conclude the paper.

Paris will be the context research for its has witnessed more than any other city the recurrence of such ephemeral events and their evolution over time.

Thesis Supervisor: Julian Beinart
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INTRODUCTION

The Universal Expositions.¹

" Sujet de délire au dixneuvième siècle"

(Dictionnaire des idées reçues, Flaubert)

" You will be astonished and amused and enlightened
To be abroad at home
To be on stage, behind the scene and in the audience
To be in the realm of tomorrow on the rim of today.

(NY World's Fair, "Going to the Fair" 1939)

The International Exposition of 1937 in Paris was the last one of a long series of French Expositions, breaking off an almost mythical tradition that originated in the mid-18th century. Indeed, after the greatest Fair of 1900 in Paris, the whole international exhibition movement seems to have changed. The aims of the exhibitions became narrower, less political. As the twentieth century began, a new and cold attitude towards World's Fairs was most evident in France and elsewhere; the magnificent display of the Expo 1900 was seemingly impossible to repeat or surpass for many years to come.

Nevertheless, International Universal Expositions² continued all over the world but belonged already to Modern Times. This revival of so-called World's Fairs was a pale imitation of the great Fairs of the 19th Century. They became more pragmatic, materialistic for they were and still are more or less dominated by private great corporations, more able than any government to raise funds for such huge enterprises. They even increased in number, if not in size and quality, for exhibitions are still unique opportunities to bring together large numbers of buyers and sellers.

But none of these later Expositions approached the idealism, intended grasp or political significance of the last French Expositions of the 19th Century. They were a forceful and serious demonstration of French pride, as well as being part of France's domestic and foreign policy; they were designed to remind the Frenchmen and visitors from abroad of the glory of France, the magnificence of Paris. (R. Mandell, 1967).

Yet, since 1937, the French Government seemed to have lost faith in the benefits of Great Expositions. The fact that this last Exposition did not succeed in preventing the events that happened two years after does not seem to be the only reason for such a long withdrawal; the deficit of the 1937 exhibition, the weak financial situation of the City of Paris had made impossible the holding of Fairs planned for 1954 and thereafter 1959. It is true that, with their increasing gigantism, Expositions become more and more costly enterprises.

However, it is obvious that the benefits of an Exposition can not be considered only in terms of financial returns. Long term impacts have to be taken into account and constitute in fact the essential aims of all Fairs, although we shall notice that they have evolved over time.

The occurrence of a new Universal Exposition in France after many decades of³ silence will appear as a great event expected by all, loaded with new significance. The Exposition Universelle 1989 is resuming with a lost tradition yet impregnated with the spirit and concerns of our times. This exposition, of course, is at the very beginning of its life and conceptualization, and very little information has been released. Nevertheless, the fact that the decision of "having a Fair" was made is already the sign of a turn into the history of Expositions (in France at least) and their purposes: this decision constitutes almost the main point of the coming manifestation.

This paper will be mainly devoted to the study of the Universal Expositions' phenomenon in general, 1989's Exhibition's project being the inspirator for this topic. In the light of the multitude and recurrence of Expositions (industrial, national, universal...) , it does not seem useful to re-examine their basic principles. The question remains, nevertheless, since the holding of a Universal Exposition has always been controversial and as much defended as vigorously attacked for economic, social or political points of view. Referring to the past, the paper will raise the issues of the role of Expositions, (has a Fair still a "raison d'etre" nowadays?) and, through the overview of the evolution in their concepts and goals, will speculate about the reasons of such a revival today, and about their potential future...

Sources of information are tremendous about the details concerning each Exposition separately, whereas extremely limited in the field of the synthetical approach. This abundant bibliography tends to consider each Exposition as an independent event and constitutes a propitious field for technical reports and anecdotal literature, official reports and catalogues, pamphlets and iconography. Unfortunately, rare are the works which investigate the relationships among Expositions, and between the Expositions and their context.

This paper does not pretend to deal with the entire phenomenon, but with a series of themes which will enlight various aspects of the Universal Expositions. It will reveal the ambiguous ambivalence conveyed by all Expositions; it is therefore under the light of contrasts that this investigation will be undertaken.

THEME ONE: The Fair and the Affair.....The Mask

- ... Where we shall examine the hidden side of an Exposition.
- ... Where we shall see how idealism may differ from reality.
- ... Reflections about the evolution of the phenomenon

THEME TWO: The Fair and the City.....The Festival

- ... Where we shall see a new "city" growing into another, inducing its slow transformation.
- ... Where we shall look at the city as a decor for festivals.
- ... Where we shall debate the issues of an Exposition taking place whether within or outside the city.

THEME THREE: The Time of an Exposition.....The Time

- ... Reflections about the time scale of an Exposition as the symbol of a passed epoch and of a future one as well.
- ... Reflections about the "ephemeralness" of an Exposition as opposed to its permanence.
- ... Therefore, reflections about a temporary built environment as opposed to a solid and enduring one.

THEME FOUR: Reflections about the Paris/Expo 1989.....

- ... Where it will be given an actual report of the Expo 1989 project.
- ... Where the coming festival will be shortly discussed in relation to the three preceding themes selected for this paper's purpose.

THE FAIR AND THE AFFAIR

1

The Mask

There is a mask that fits so well the face that one cannot distinguish the reality from the illusion . Therefore, the mask is not perceived as such. This mask is designed to fool the observer.

There is a mask which is a tangible screen between the object and the sight. The mask, thus, acts through the effect of contrast and dichotomy. This mask thus evokes images of ambivalence.

Ambiguity is the essence of all Universal Expositions.

Whenever the magic world "World's Fair" is pronounced, it makes no doubt that, through its terminology and the event it represents, it evokes thoughts of fantasy and enchantment! A Fair is at first sight devoted to excitement, amusements and evolves in a spendthrift atmosphere that entrances all people. A paramount intention of Universal Exhibitions' organizers has always been to produce a strong visual effect and to offer a visual feast in the shortest period of time.

However, the colors, the noise and crowds, the thrilling ambiance and the multiple opportunity to satisfy everyone's curiosity often mask untold purposes; ambiguity seems to be the very essence of World's Fairs. If we look carefully at the "raison d'etre" of a Universal Exhibition, we cannot think of its purpose as being of amusements only. Would such a huge coalition, governmental and international, occur for the bare pleasure of thousands of visitors? The entrance fees would never compensate the enormous investments of all kinds required by a Universal Exhibition. The pomp, the ostentation and the sensation of wealth that emanate from such festivals are undoubtedly the expression of a number of goals to be achieved by the organizers. Indeed, we shall see that Exhibitions can serve many purposes such as economic expansion, didacticism, public relations or establishment of national prestige.

Fairs

Reflecting back, Fairs have always existed as one of the main element of trade and commerce. They were very important in the revival of commerce, the intellectual life of the country and had already their role to play in diplomacy and political stability among nations. The medieval city was the crossway of paths and men, goods and culture; today, the city is still a place for exchange, competition and internationalism. Although communications of all kinds have

nowadays considerably improved, the spirit of the medieval fairs is still preserved in many regards; from the "stuff trade fairs" to the "circus fairs", cities will keep on forever with this traditional means of animating a place once in a while.

Expositions

From that tradition, another type of fair called Expositions emerged during the 18thC; they were particularly common in Paris. Their purposes differed from the trade fairs because they did not deal with the everyday life consumption; their objective was more to display rather than sell or buy, and they were organized by institutions rather than by trademen. A first "species" of these Expositions was known as the Salons, public art displays sponsored by Louis XIV and the Academie des Beaux-Arts. Their intentions, besides the promotion of sales for the artists of the Academie, were mainly to strengthen the national artistic fame of France, to increase competition for excellence and to educate the people in Art matters.

These Salons, although far away from the notion of fairs, contained already in essence the principal characteristics of the University Expositions to come: competition, education and national pride.

C O M P E T I T I O N A N D C O O P E R A T I O N

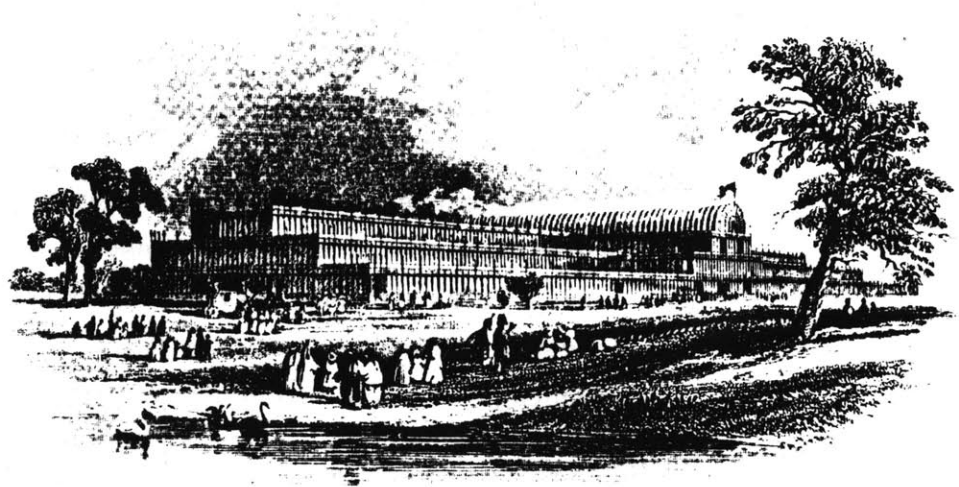
The first public industrial displays had similar purposes. "One can say that the general idea carried out by an Exposition is that of gathering works and products in a single place, classified by kinds, types and origins and displayed before the visitors like in a competition show. This provocative comparison stimulates rivalry and, therefore, corresponds to the very essence of commerce and profit. This is the predominant and basic motivation for an exposition to occur. They contribute then to the divulgation of industrial progresses and even artistic values". (George Berger, 1901).

Francois De Chateauneuf¹, when he organized the First National Industrial Exhibition in 1798, intended it to be a means to expand the French commerce on the continent and also to raise the level of French technology above that of England.

Therefore, exhibitions, being part of the long struggle against England, remained essentially national. From 1798 to 1849, Paris held eleven national expositions, none of them being opened to foreign displays for protectionist and economic reasons. The French Chambers of Commerce were demonstrating strong resilience to the opening of their frontiers to foreign industry. They were afraid that the British supremacy would take too much advantage of such an opportunity.

However, as early as 1834, there had been requests from supporters of a liberal economy that foreigners be admitted to exhibit their products: "Why

1 *The Crystal Palace, London 1851*



are our expositions still so restricted? What a source of knowledge it would be for everyone!" (Le Centenaire, 1834).

International Context

In the mid-19th century, the conditions necessary to create a propitious environment for the advent of international exhibitions were met. It was a time of full expansion of industry and liberal capitalism. The new technologies were giving rise to the political ambitions of an emerging middle class whose main occupations were commerce, banking and speculation. It is also the time when Europe was identifying itself to the whole world and its civilization to 'the' civilization. It became a logical process that the Exhibitions would open their gates to other countries, according to the wishes of the "libres-échangistes". Yet, this new step in internationalizing Exhibitions scared most of the entrepreneurial milieu. The enlargement of Exhibitions' scope meant that England would be favored, because England at that time enjoyed an incontestable commercial and industrial supremacy. It thus come as no surprise that the first International Exhibition was put up by England. The London Exhibition in 1851 inaugurated the long series of Universal Expositions to come. The British had another vision of what an International Exhibition should be; they believed that the comparison with foreign products would improve the english products' quality instead of threatening England's economy (like Frenchmen used to think). Prince Albert was also animated by idealist feelings and thought that such a meeting would contribute to international harmony by demonstrating the similarities of men's interest. The Crystal Palace was so successful that Napoleon III learned from the lesson. No more than four years later, he inaugurated the first French Universal Exposition. The Empire, still young² wanted to impose its existence among the established great powers and to show that it was still ahead in matters of Arts and Culture. So, the Expositi-

tion 1855 had to surpass in magnificence the Crystal Palace: the Palace of Industry would be not only luminous and enormous, but also solemn and impressive; French pride was at stake.

The purposes of these great Exhibitions were similar to those of the previous national Exhibitions; the objective was still to place various products in competition in order to strengthen the national economy. "These Great Exhibitions were the product of a liberal conception of economy: improvement of production and performance through free competition. They had value in a world where restrictions of all kinds had been reduced to a minimum" (W. Giedon in *Time, Space & Architecture*). The term 'Universal', innovated in 1855, suggested a larger coverage than any previous Exhibitions. 1855 is indeed the first one which combined the products of the Salons and those of industry. Arts were considered as important as industrial products; the rigid cast division between 'Arts Utiles' and 'Arts Liberaux' was broken. But the notion of competition had changed. Before 1855, the competition was national; yet, this internal competition was transcending national boundaries in that it was conferring upon the country a status within the international community. After 1855, the notion of 'universality' wanted to introduce a new spirit, that of national cooperation competing against foreign nations. However, the competition which now occurred at the international level, took place to the detriment of the domestic competition.

Domestic
Context

Of course, besides the obvious mercantile character of these Exhibitions originating from the traditional fairs, Universal Exhibitions were still occasions for awarding prizes of excellence. Universal Exhibitions made or destroyed fortunes and careers, and could even establish the prestige of a

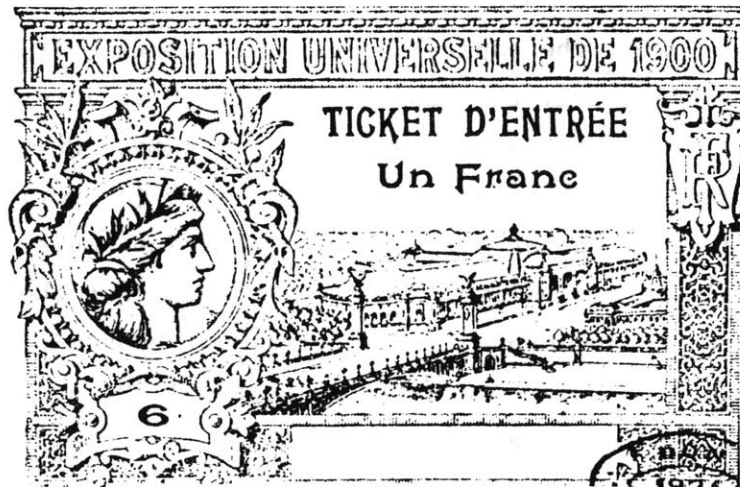
nation. Tough battles for success have hidden behind the happy mask of the scene.

Nevertheless, the opening of frontiers and the liberalization of the economy probably contributed to a certain extent to weaken domestic economy. "Putting aside all moral and political considerations and considering them solely from an economical point of view, Exhibitions are much less profitable to the exhibitors of the host nation than to those of the other participating nations. Despite its great political advantages, it did not produce for us the economic benefits that some foreign nations derived from it" (Le Centenaire, 1890). Besides, in the international struggle for economic supremacy, the capital of the country becomes the sole representative of the various regions; this raises the issue of centralization vs centralization. A region easily finds its own place within the framework of a national competition. At an international level, the capital necessarily takes over the regions in the name of the whole nation; only the capital can afford an international role whereas the regions become sustainers of the whole game. Only the United States have found no difficulty in setting their exhibitions (or World's Fair) elsewhere than in Washington (Chicago, San Francisco, Saint Louis) and always demonstrated a great deal of flexibility. It is also true that the administrative American Capital never coincided with the centers of economic expansion. To that extent, Chicago had represented all the hopes of the American growth especially during the 1880's. Preferably, a World's Fair would be located in a context symbolizing expansion, progress and future. In European countries, the capitals are still supporting all the vital functions of the nation, which explains why Universal Exhibitions always occurred in the capitals'



Tickets to the Expositions

2.



area. About this, Goulette's pamphlet in 1895³ remains famous; it claimed a total opposition to the holding of a University Exhibition in 1900 for the reasons we just mentioned. "Pas d'Exposition en 1900" intended to support all the provinces against the preeminence of Paris when an Exhibition takes place and expressed decentralist opinions. No statistical proofs have seriously supported the thesis according to which the regional economy suffered during Exposition time. But the pamphlet made it clear that the continued growth of Paris was made at the expenses of the countryside by increasing, during the Expo years, the centripetal action of the capital (funds, talents, population... all converging toward Paris as if attracted by magnetism).

Benefits

To the opinion of many, particularly that of G. Berger II⁴, no Exposition ever produced financial or economic benefits. Moreover, rare are the expositions (costly enterprizes) which had direct returns. An exposition can be financed by the Government or by private initiatives. A third solution consists of a bilateral financing which is the most frequently used and tends supposedly to reduce risks of financial disasters. Frederic LePlay⁵ thought that considerations about profit should be secondary, as compared to the spiritual importance of the Expositions' purposes. But this noble intention reflected only the part of idealism contained in the concept of Expositions. In fact, even though returns were indeed minor objectives, economic and national benefits were among the main motivations for Expositions to occur.

At first look, Exhibitions of international scope bring foreign visitors and, therefore, currencies and funds. This inflow is good for the general prosperity of the whole nation, particularly during crisis years which often coincide with the occurrence of Exhibitions. It is expected that the supply

of money and the hopes for more clement times should give rise to a sense of national cooperation which will generate the energy necessary for a successful Exhibition. We shall see later on to what extent it is also expected that this concentration of preparing a festival should divert attention away from the state of crisis. But how long can this last for? The durability of the results of such an expensive and time consuming enterprise depends eventually on external factors rather than solely on the organizers' will to enrich the nation . How can an ephemeral event such as a 6 month Exhibition induce durable effects that would be equivalent to long term policies in terms of economic revival ?

LePlay was right. We may not be concerned by profit; as a proof of it, Universal Exhibitions continue to be put up, despite the fact that none of them had ever made financial returns except at a local scale. Yet, regarding the question of economical and national benefits, the observation of datas would lead to the same type of conclusions: if no serious statistics have ever proved that Universal Exhibitions are a loss of time and money, there is no proof either of tangible financial benefits (except for the host city). The question mark stood for a long time in the polemical discussions that opposed supporters and opponents to Universal Exhibitions.

The Mask

The conflict between regional and national economy, the hypothesis according to which a Universal Exhibition cannot be of any benefit in terms of economical expansion, would still stand as a crucial dilemma if trade and economical policies had not been gradually transcended by politics. The opening of the frontiers and the enforcement of a more liberal economy go evidently along with political considerations. It is clear that businesses, competition and

profit are undissociable but may be free of political overtones. Yet, the image of economical prosperity of a country is the essential element which put a nation on the map. The happening of a Universal Exhibition appears as a whole "mise en scene" designed to show abroad that the nation is prospering and stable. It is a strategic mask that acts at the political level; indeed, trust in the wealth of each other is the motor of good international relationships.

The idea of "mise en scene" is not a bare product of imagination, as we shall see later on. History has often proved that Exhibition would most likely occur in relation with a crisis period, whether economic or diplomatic. One of the outstanding examples could be the Chicago World's Fair of 1933 which was a bold challenge facing the consequences of the financial crisis of 1929. It was the expression of an attempt to shine again in the context of a "Century of Progress" side by side with unemployment and bankruptcy. "The masquerade of an Exhibition must make us believe that this is the dawn after dark and that the dawn itself is the most splendid ever seen. It must make us believe that once the scaffolds down and the worksite clear, the pavilions and decorums are the image of a worth nation" (N.Y. Times, 1933).

Change

Some governments often assisted private enterprises for their presentation in Exhibitions. But, as we mentioned above, governments (specially through the latter part of the 19thC.), were more and more concerned by the political inspirations of their Exhibitions. Therefore, businessmen were increasingly forced to deal by themselves with their own exhibits. Furthermore, as trade expanded, specialization became a necessity, and even a 'Universal' Exposition could no longer cover such a wide array of topics. Simultaneously, groups of

businessmen⁶ formed and put up their own specialized Fairs which were (and still are) addressed to a specific audience. The consequence is now that commercial and industrial competition operate through the cooperative efforts of private initiatives.

This evolutionary change implied that it gradually became less important and less feasible to hold Universal Expositions as means to sustain domestic and foreign trade. Indeed, the Universal Exhibitions became for the businessmen a means of publicity more than a means of trade. It explains their growing participation and to some extent the fact that the modern Expositions are increasingly dominated and financed by private great corporations as to serve their own interests.

E D U C A T I O N A N D A M U S E M E N T

Universal Exhibitions were motivated by great ideals, wanting to be the Consciousness of the world. The 19thC. was dominated by the Industry, the period 1920-40 was animated by Sciences and Technology whereas Man and Progress were the focal points of the 50's to the 70's. In 1989 France and her Exposition (the Paths of Freedom as the title) will seemingly remain true to their sense of messianism.

No doubt, each fair is a great event for industrials, political and intellectual elites of the world and is the occasion for demonstrating several preoccupations of the thinkers and rulers of its age; Great Expositions could offer a sort of comprehensive, though variously distorted, snapshots of civilization at a specific period of time.

Therefore, Fairs and moreover Universal Exhibitions become opportunities to educate people. Indeed, according to the protocole upon which the Bureau des Expositions Universelles was created, it is confirmed that one of the main characteristics (if not purpose) of the exhibitions is its educative role: "The Expositions, to be differentiated from commercial or special Fairs, should contribute to the education of the visitors" (BIE, 1928).⁷

Nevertheless, Georges Berger I, one of the brilliant organizers of the Expo 1889, had already perceived a problem in matters of education and published its "Suggestions for the next Fair" addressed to the 1892 Columbian Exposition's

organizers. In this publication, he complains about the fact that the Expositions tend to be too materialistic, displaying mostly objects or scientific and technical discoveries as results, lacking the necessary environment for an appropriate understanding; the casual crowd would more easily apprehend a process than bare results; Exhibitions should be a "display of ideas and concepts" instead of the usual "display of things".

Deviation

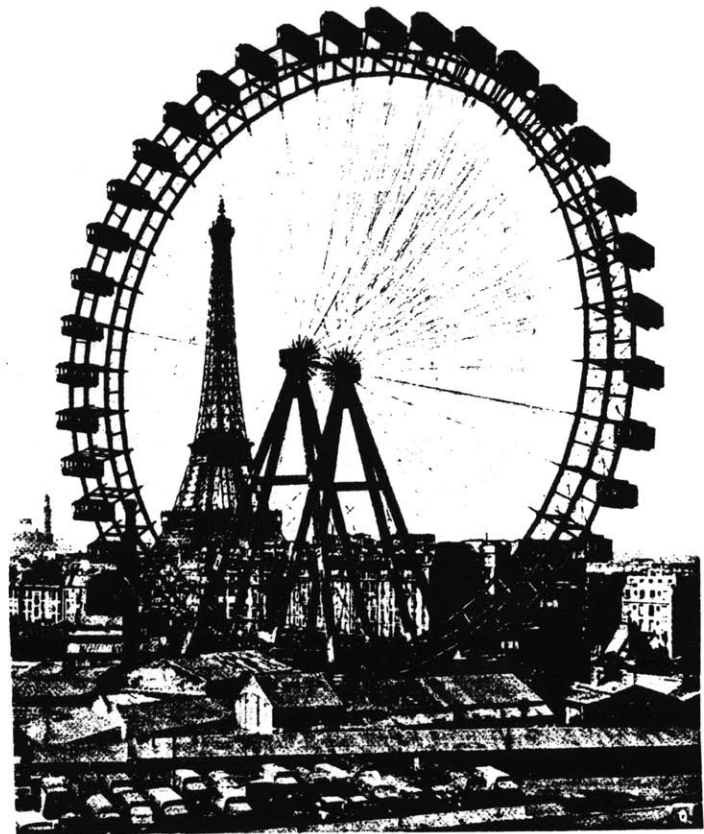
Indeed, since LePlay's experiment in 1967, when for the first time concerns about social matters were expressed (pavilion of the History of Labor),⁸ educational aspect of Exhibitions seems to have degenerated. In 1937, about the Exposition des Arts et Techniques, Giraudoux wrote: "Indeed, one must not dissimulate the truth, the Expo 1937 is not an artistic manifestation but a hypocritical commercial operation".

Moreover, according to G. Berger II⁹, Exhibitions had already been turned away from their prime purposes which were the exaltation of the human work in all fields and its educative part. Organizers know by experience how little is the crowd that comes to inform and to learn. Yet, the success of a Fair unfortunately depends, among other factors, on the financial returns and is confirmed by it. We are thus confronting a dilemma: it seems that the ambition for an Exposition of gathering the most educated and modern spirits of an epoch, is fully justified only in proportion with the number of strollers and idlers hungry for fun and amusement which come to the Exposition; it is also sad to notice that the approach and access to culture is facilitated through a series of circus-type attractions that have apparently always been part of such manifestations, its inevitable fate....

Attractions

Though LePlay had (unsuccessfully) resisted pressure for commercial attractions, the exposition 1867 embraced also an amusement park and side shows of a carnival type. From then, each Exposition had their popular amusements. The Expo 1878 was famous for its "Rue des Nations", meanwhile the "Rue du Caire" was the hot spot of the Expo 1889; the suggestive belly dancing of the Egyptian girls was whispered about everywhere and came as a shock to the puritanical American society during the World's Fair 1893. The preeminence of attractions went to the point that the Chicago's Fair had a special area, the Midway Plaisance, totally disconnected with the Exposition proper. Whether mixed up or confined to separate areas, the "attractions" were mostly housed in shanties, often defacing the physical environment of the fair grounds. They were of various kinds such as sideshows, restaurants, cafes and bazaars selling exotic souvenirs (made in France). Those that were not merely temporary shacks were feeble limitations of buildings and places elsewhere: the foreign village type of show, introduced at the Paris/Expo 1889 such as Java and Cairo became recurrent until the very last French Universal Expositions. They were part of a new kind of quasi-educational amusement that appeared in the 1880's, serving the so called purposes of industrialists, artists, politicians and other fields.

This duality between attractions and the "predominantly" serious purpose of a Universal Exposition constituted (and still does) the mainpoint of some of the opponents to the holdings of Fairs. They claim that commercial attractions conflict with the noble aims of Universal Exhibitions and denature not only the spirit of the Fair but also the image of the City. This kind of attack on the principle of Exhibitions is not new: the Expo 1900 was already subject to this type of criticism according to M. Barres and other critics



3 *The Big Wheel, Paris 1900*

of his time "Paris was no longer the intellectual and elegant capital, the center of friendly sociability and conversation; it had become the central point of depravation and the Expo 1900 was to be transformed into a disgusting and hideous fair... By tempting French people with lemonade and games, the Expositions lead to the deterioration of their integral virtues ..." (Le Figaro. August 24, 1895).

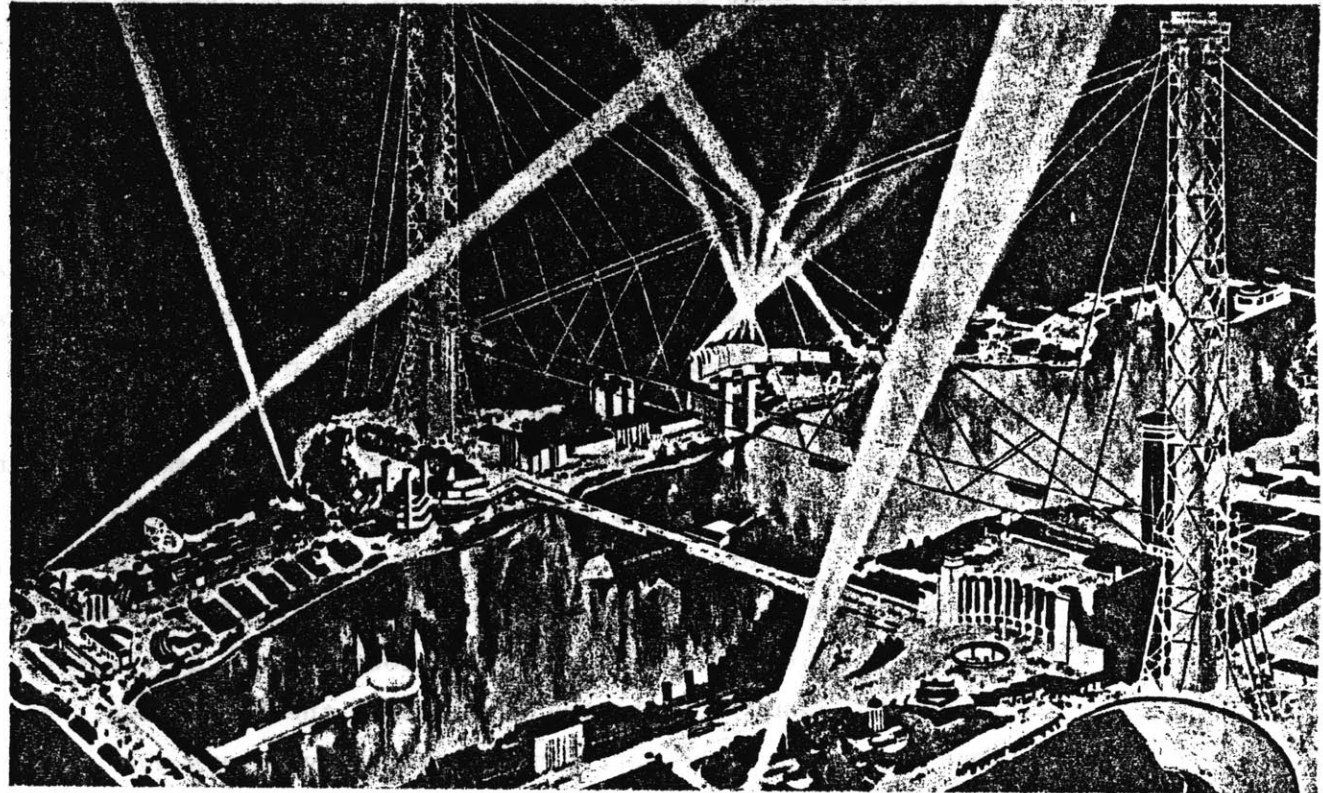
This ambiguity between amusements and didacticism must not be overemphasized; it is obvious that the visitors' motivations to come to the Exposition are different than those of the organizers. The atmosphere of excitement released in such occasions is inevitable, and in a way must prevail...

Didacticism
and
Magic

"The world Exhibitions glorify the exchange value of commodities. They create a framework in which commodities' intrinsic value is eclipsed. They open up a phantasmagoria that people enter to be amused" (Walter Benjamin.). Attractions are at the very base of the Universal Exhibitions. Attraction allows the imaginery consumption: the visitor "stands as customer in the foreground" (Walter Benjamin). Every non-attractive Exhibition would be neglected by the large public, whatever the matter is, either commercial, industrial, scientific or cultural, or architectural... The intellectual results of an Exposition are not always brilliant: "they looked at the decor, they do not know anything about the play" ironically wrote Victor Fournel in 1889.

Despite unfavorable opinions, attractions are not only mere deplorable necessities, but contribute to the prestige of the Exposition. Besides, these attractions may involve the participation of the visitors who became simultaneously spectators and actors; this presupposes the access to knowledge and culture through their active participation instead of a passive and static attitude.

THE CHICAGO DAILY NEWS
SOUVENIR OF A CENTURY OF PROGRESS--1934
57TH YEAR. OF THE PUBLICATION OF THE NEWS. MAY 26--NOVEMBER 1. PHOTOGRAVURE ISSUE



"Attractions" then can be of educational value. Besides the thrilling attractions (Big Wheel, haunted houses...) which now are the essential aspects of our modern Magic Lands, besides the visual and sensational shows related with applications of Sciences and Technology (optometric illusions, special effects), there is now a third category that can be classified under the label "socio-educative" attractions: reconstitution of exotic sites or environments, historical plays, popularization of great scientific discoveries through anecdotes. (Planetarium, Medicine and the Man of Glass...). This approach by combining leisure with education, fulfills the dual purpose of attracting the public and carrying out a real cultural quality. In this sense, it seemingly succeeds where the traditional means of exhibiting have failed. We have to remember how little educational influences Expositions had when they were set up with showcases, explanatory pictures of industrial products or displays of manufacturing processes".

To that extent, the World's Fair of Chicago in 1933 represented a solution to the educational problem which merits to retain the attention and should constitute a model for the Expositions to come. The Expo 1933 was didactic oriented as claimed by many other expositions, but was also the first one to be non-competitive. 1933 seemed to have dealt in the most comprehensive way with an important topic: "A Century of Progress". It intended to sum up the progresses of civilization up until 1933 and to give a clear vision of the future. Carefully considered, the Expo 1933 was one of the best experiments in popularization. The Fair did not show man making a new civilization; it did not show the boring results of technical progresses; it did not show either man controlling or directing the world, but it did explain how he adapted him-

self to the inventive process and to the advancement of technology in relation with his everyday life.

It is possible that this experiment in pedagogy can be successful; the hiatus between what Science knows and what the public knows can be bridged. A Universal Exposition should be able to give a wholistic view of nowadays society in order to envision what the future could be like. Instead of showing independent parts of a coordinated system, it is more evocative to link them together. So, science is shown in its affiliation with industry, and industry is represented working its irresistible alteration in the life of the average man. Perhaps, thus, man is given not merely a didactic but an emotional perception of science, progress and a sense of a future.

But the Expo 1933 had also its playground, the "Midway". Therefore, the visitor is not constrained to educate himself. Somehow, he takes as much as he can stand and is not asked to strain his intellect. Actually, to the despair of the organizers' didactic intentions, he can go to the "Midway" and fulfill there his desire for divertimento, ignoring the rest of the Exposition. In fact, this clear dichotomy, often noticed in most of the Fairs' grounds, between the official part and the "fun" part of the Exposition does not really help the promotion of education. Of course, as we saw above, solutions to this problem were found in some display combining the sensational and the educational. But to what extent they actually "educate" the visitors? Their didactical intentions should go beyond the mere divulgation of information; they should give the visitor the desire of "informing" himself even more after the Exposition is gone. Then only, we could say whether the intentions are achieved or not. Actually, the ephemeral attribute the Expositions induces necessarily

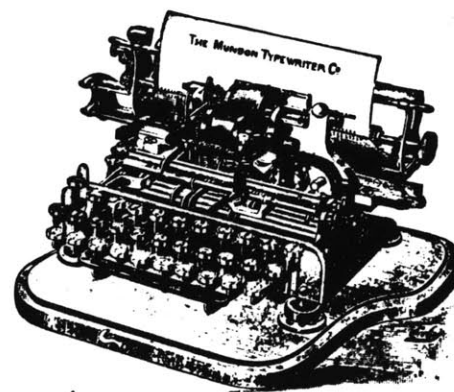
5. *Light show engineer, Paris 1889*
6. *Muson type-writer, Chicago 1893*
7. *Sewing-machine Grover and Baker
Paris 1855*

the fact that their educational role stops on the closing day. The reports usually published after each Exposition may pursue this role; the Exposition may serve then as an educational catalyst more than an effective means of educating people. Moreover, "to some extent, people do not come to the Expo to understand but come not to understand" as ironically noticed by Pascal Ory (Les Expositions Universelles, 1982). People come to be astonished; this may be the secret of a good catalyst. The organizers are aware of the fact: they never swerve an Exposition from its "wonderful" glitter.

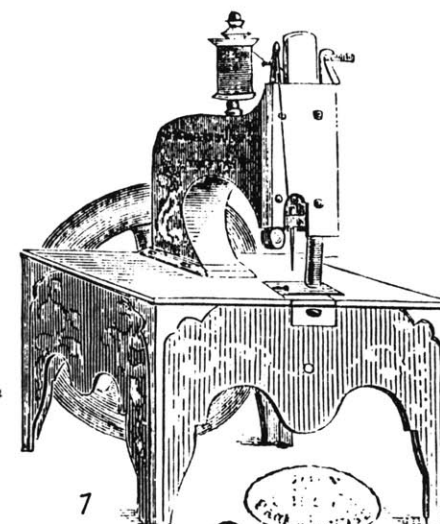
In the 19thC., the displaying of small inventions such as the photograph, the typewriter and the telegraph were accessible to the understanding of the casual visitors, because they could be easily integrated in everyday life. Yet, these objects, meant to inform the consumer about the progress of technology, held a sort of magic; revealed all of a sudden to the dazzled eyes of an ignorant public, these objects were designed to transform irreversibly the



5

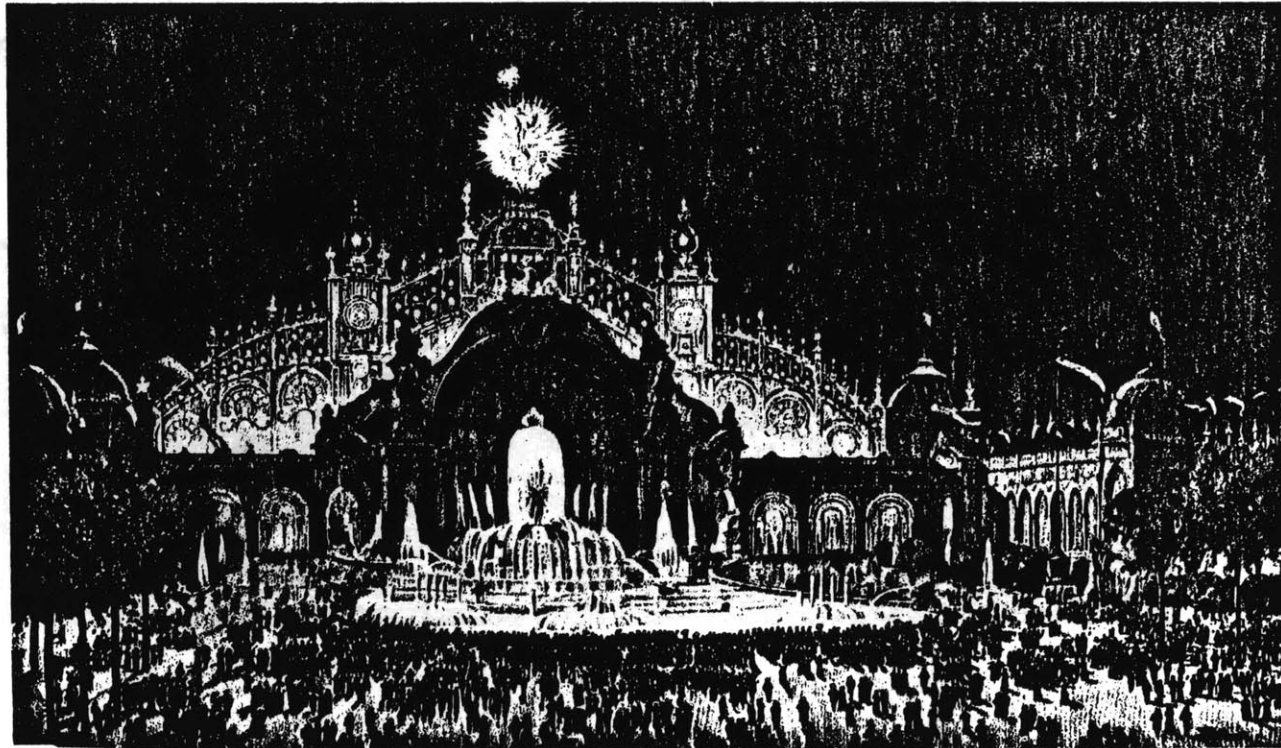


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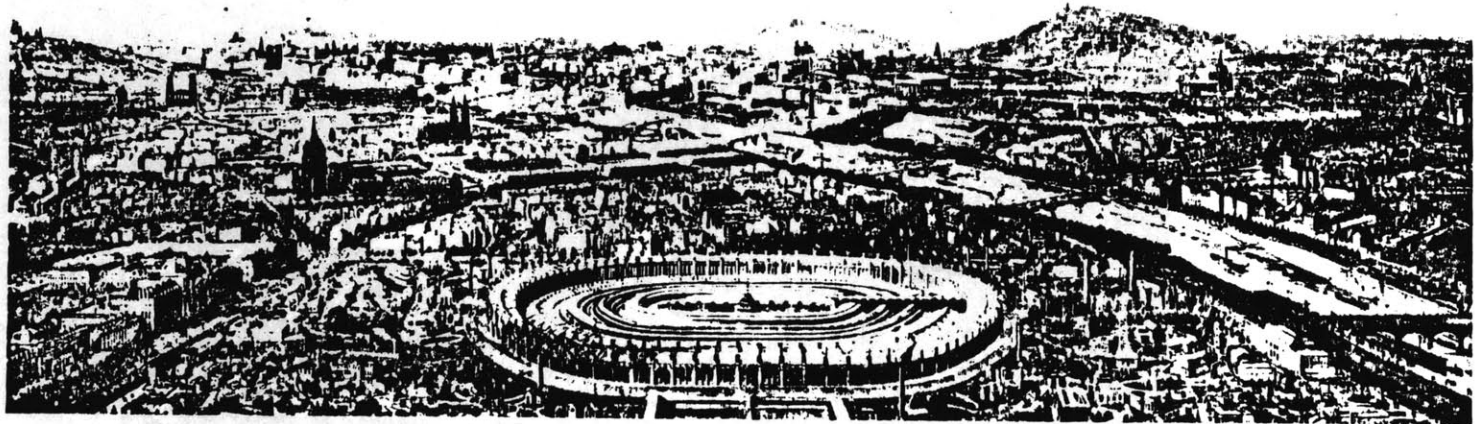
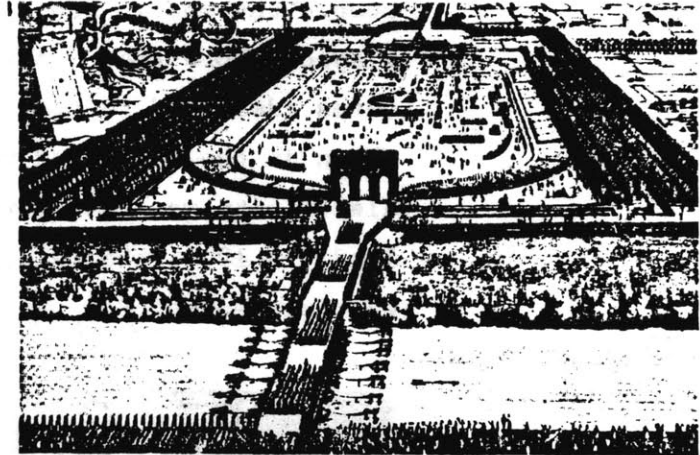
domestic and professional modes of life. This is indeed what interests the people the most: how will their own narrow life be changed by what is displayed before them? Already in 1878, one could notice that the Public Lectures (designed to those who willed to know more about Technics and Sciences as shown in the Expo) had very little attendance. Meanwhile, the advent of electricity was transforming the Exposition and the whole city into a fairyland; in 1900, the Palace of Electricity stood where the Palace of Industry was located before! Enchantment was leading didacticism to its death.



9

*Fete de la Federation 1792
Champs de Mars*

10 *Palais de l'Industrie 1867
Champs de Mars*



Education
And
Indoctrination

Although educational displays and an atmosphere of amusement seem almost naturally coupled, this association may also proceed from a deliberate will of the organizers' part to extend their didactic intentions beyond the purely pragmatic people's education to their political education, in other words, to their indoctrination.

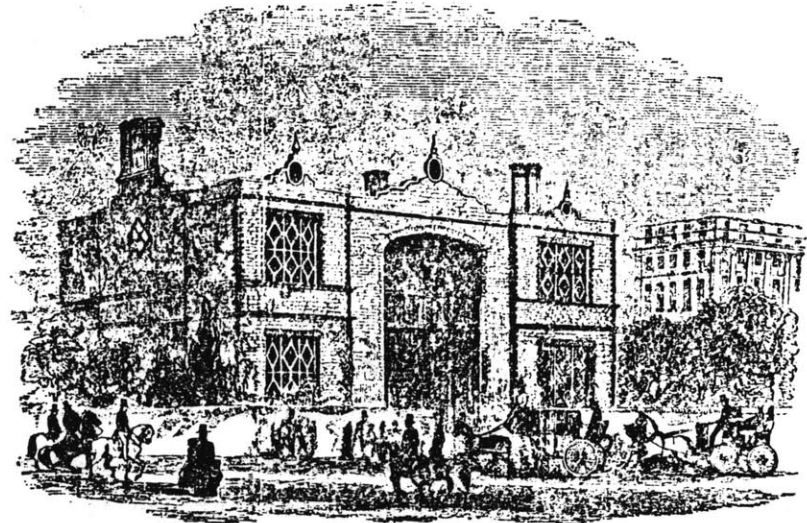
The Revolutionists had perfectly envisioned the power of a festive atmosphere. If euphoria can be generated, then such a mobilization of energies can be exploited; a crowd all together constitutes a high emotive capital which can be manipulated by a fine staging. In 1792, a new religion was organized around the altar of the Nation and celebrated the 'Supreme Being' and its divinities (Reason and Liberty). The Revolutionists 'Fete' was canalizing energies in a determined political prospective; it ought to serve public salvation. But, through its naive theatricallity and symbolism, it was a means of propaganda and of political ascendancy over people's minds.

In 1867, Prince Napoleon himself declared: "The ignorant crowd has to be amused". Amusing and, therefore, distracting people is the simplest form of manipulation. As a matter of fact, Universal Expositions mostly occurred during crisis or conflictual periods. "As an expression of pride and of identity, a Universal Exposition can focus the energies and interests of the population" (Allwood, 1980), and, therefore, deviate their concerns from the crisis state of the nation.

Education
and
Socialism

Manipulation and education often go together: to "inform" means also to "form" or to shape people's minds. At first, Expositions were fields for social experiments under the paternalist "protection" of the Second Empire. It is

- 11 Workers' dwellings exhibited at the Expo 1867, Paris
 12 Workers' dwellings built for the Expo 1851, London
 13 Workers' dwelling at the Expo 1867, Paris, at the expenses of Napoleon III



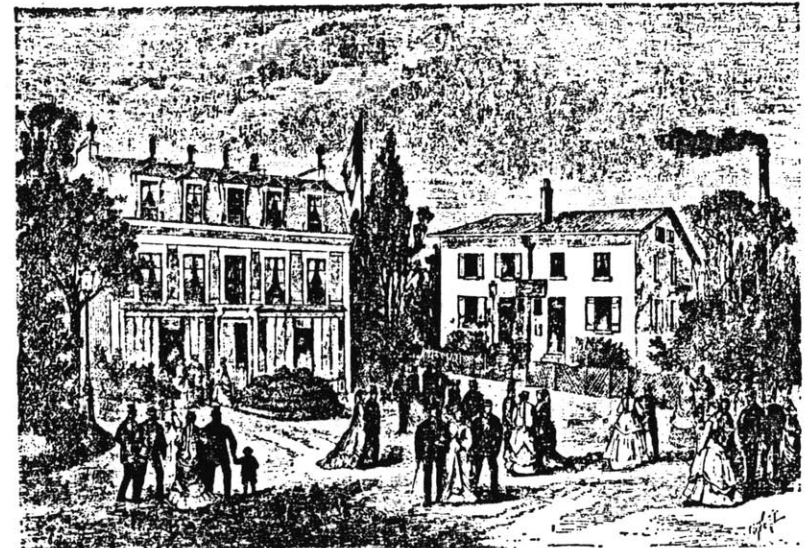
11

Modelli d'abitazioni economiche (disegno di S. A. R. (Il Principe Alberto).

12



13



CASE D'OPERAJ.

true that the Expo 1855 showed more demagogical tendencies than real social concerns; the artificial and pompous exhaltation of the working class, impregnated with poetry and idealism, was their way to deal with the social question; to be preoccupied by the working class was a fashionable intellectual trend.

"Rivalisez, burins, marteaux et limes,
Cerveaux actifs, bras forts et courageux,
Fils du travail, vos tetes sont sublimes" ¹⁰

But again , this glorifying approach was intended to seduce the working class and to persuade it about the beauty of the accomplished work, or, in other words, to distract it from its real condition. It was also a question of adapting society to the growing technology: the "machines" had to be accepted by the mentality of a class still impregnated with peasants and crafts origins; indeed, not long ago workers had sabotaged the machines which they considered "tools to manufacture unemployment". The glorification of industry and man's labor, in order to flatter the workingclass and to reconcile it with the world of machines and managers was a manipulation which failed: the "divine and noble workers" of the Second Empire soon demonstrated, in that period of social conflict, that these efforts of seduction were useless and that they were perfectly conscious of their conditions. The Commune of 1870 marked a change in the emphasis given to the social question by the Second Empire and the Republic during the Expositions. In 1867, the workers were invited to cooperate more closely with the managerial core and to meditate about their working and living conditions. The Expo included the Pavilion of the History of Labor, a section devoted to the possible improvements of the physical and moral conditions of the working population and also a "working-class report" consisting of the suggestions of the

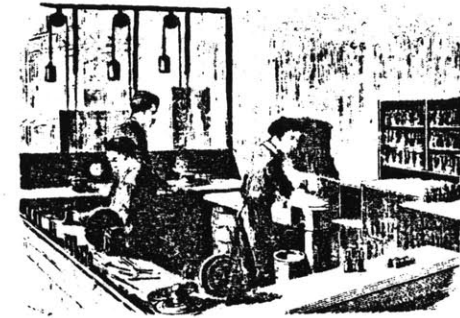
- 14 Three of the manufacturing demonstrations at the Expo 1867
- a. Les Dentelles
 - b. Les Pipes
 - c. Les Lorgnettes



Les Dentelles.



Les Pipes.



PETITES MÈTIERS — Les Lorgnettes. — DESSIN DE M. GUILLET.

workers' delegations. In this Exhibition, "the proletarian visitors were given to understand that they did not lack basic necessities but had on the contrary prospered well enough since 1848 to afford clothes, utensils and gadgets laid before them in a grotesque confusion" (F. Brown, 1980). This perception of the social question left a bitter taste. The Government probably regretted its gesture of populist demagoguery: the Expo 1867 gave birth to the first legal trade unions in France, one of the enduring traces left by an Expo.

The above explains why this aspect of didacticism, after 1867, has been cautiously avoided; the Republican Expositions were never to include any section concerning the working class section, because its consequences were not those expected.

It was only in 1937 that the Exposition promoted a category of displays called "Questions Sociales". This was the least the Front Populaire could do to demonstrate to the people the genuineness of the Government's concerns. But it was still an euphemistic way to deal with labor conflicts, which were at that time the most serious problems the government had to face.

Nevertheless, such influences brought substantial results. It could be reasoned that each Exposition was related to a step in the history of social politics in France. There is no doubt for the Right Wing that the Expo 1867 led to the Commune. It is also true that the workers' meetings during the Universal Exposition of London in 1862 gave birth to the Internationale, and that after the Expo 1867, the representatives of the working class corporation continued to meet and encouraged unionist movements. Although the Expo 1878 prevented an international congress designed to remobilize the socialist movement, the Expo 1889 was to mark the appearance of the first socialist trade unions.

The evolution had thus deviated far away from LePlay's archetypal notions of social and humanist matters: from one Exposition to the other, "social" evolved into socialism meanwhile didacticism was evolving into "magic".

C H A U V I N I S M A N D I N T E R N A T I O N A L I S M

"Such a festival could be planned during a time that still had faith in optimistic philosophical systems, hopes for social reforms, joy in expanding material wealth, and confidence in the moral benefits of Arts" (Georges Mandell, 1967). Indeed, looking at the phenomenon of the Expositions in general, one can actually notice that all of them, at least until 1900, seem to proceed from a common philosophy encompassing three large notions: optimism, industrialism and paternalism. The Saint Simonists, prophetizing a rational world ruled by industry enterprises, took up the idea of a Universal Exhibitions as an experiment. The Emperor Napoleon III, another idealist, believed in the promotion of universal peace through industrialization and the abolishment of poverty through workingclass cooperation. The first Universal Exposition, inaugurated in 1855, was intended to promulgate these ideals. Prince Napoleon himself was the chief organizer; he was helped in his task by Frederick Leplay, engineer and sociologist, and Michel Chevalier, doctrinaire and economist, they controlled all decision making in Exposition matters, and their collaboration continued through the next Exposition, held in 1867.¹¹

Facts
And
Illusions

Indeed, the atmosphere of optimism and the ostentatious exaltation of great ideals which generated Exhibitions of international scope, often belonged to the realm of masquerade. A closer look at the context of birth and evolution of Universal Expositions in general shows the discrepancy between the ideals they wanted to implement and reality.

"The festivals multiply during confused and agitated epoches...It is a search for pleasure, to divert one's thought and to forgett." (Harvey Cox, 1969).

The first French Exhibition was supposed to reflect the aspiration of the Second Empire for peace and progress, "a temple of peace, bringing all nations together in concord", while France along with Britian were still fighting in the Crimea. This was quite an ironic and unfortunate coincidence. Nevertheless, the Expo 1855 was a brilliant demonstration of pride and was very successful, although it was non-profitable at all. Even more unfortunate was the fact that this "coincidence" repeated on the occasions of subsequent Exhibitions.

In 1867, the creation of the 'International Guild for Peace' (French initiative) went unnoticed and was masked by the excitement of this second Exhibition; besides, the diplomatic tension was high in Paris that summer. Recent French diplomatic fiascos¹² had put the host nation into delicate situation. However, the festival was remembered afterwards with warmth. Its success was mainly due to the enormous amount of foreign visitors who came; among them were the monarchs and rulers of 18 countries!! Thus, one of the prime purposes of the organizers was achieved: the year 1867 stood out as the "bright year of the Exposition". 1867 was to revive Napoleon III regime whose political system was decaying; the Expo 1855 and 1867 were salutary to Napoleon III and maintained Paris' preeminence as a world Capital.

The Expo 1878 was the first republican Exhibition, and was used as a political and diplomatic tool during another troubled period, after the comunard insurrection and the Franco-Prussian war (which the Expo 1867 did not succeed in preventing in spite of its efforts)¹³. Whereas Napoleon III had always tried to mask the political overtones of his Exhibitions, the Third Republic made it clear that the Exposition was held in order to show the world that France had recovered

from the wounds of the recent war, "...the only international Exhibition that had ever been promoted and supported for political purposes..." (G.F. Barwick, 1986). The young Republic proved itself capable of such a task after a defeat which many had thought beyond its capacity to repair. The Expo 1878 still stands as an example of a good political device; it brought the calm after the storm caused by the seven months of insecurity which followed the crisis of 1877¹⁴. "... The great tranquilizer was the Paris Exhibition. In 1878, all ranks of society were determined that the Exhibition should outshine the Imperial festivals. Party differences were sunk..." (Guy Chapman in "The 3rd Republic of France", London 1962).

The Expo 1889, loaded with historical symbolism, and been put up once again to restore the Publican pride during the difficult period of the 1880's, marked by the Boulanger episode¹⁵. The date of 1889 is not a random choice. It stated deliberately what the Imperial Expositions put into practice without saying. In this, the French government took a risk; 1889, holy date of French patriotism¹⁶, annoyed the monarchies which, stiffly, declined the invitation to participate in the Expo. Thus, internal dissidence and foreign disrespect were the political decor of the fourth Universal Exhibition. And, surprisingly, it was a triumph; not only it had, like in 1867, calmed the situation by focusing energies on a single and festive event, but it had also made a small profit, whereas the previous Expos were mostly financial disasters. "France diseased with politics went to the Expo as a cure", was the impression given by the Expo 1900, which witnessed Dreyfus trial and the scandal of Panama.



15 *A premonitory
photograph...*

But it is probably the Expo 1937 which contained the greatest deal of cynism in terms of peace ideals. The Pavilion of the Rassemblement pour la Paix dans le Monde (Universal Meeting for Peace) exhibited a huge table attempting to prove that the number of war years had diminished from the Renaissance period to the 20th Century; sophist reasoning when we think of the increase of conflicts all over the world during that period... The Spanish visitors to the Expo 1937 were not forgetting that their country was in total confusion and revolution the year before... The casual visitor, if not dazzled and distracted by the festive atmosphere of the Exposition, could feel this incredibly high tension that was to burst out into a second World War, two years later. It is perhaps because of self-respect and disillusionment that the promotion of grand ideals that the Expo 1937 was the last one to be held in France.

Desillusions

Seen under this light, Expositions are probably the greatest invention when it is a question of distracting people during a domestic or foreign conflictual situation. Unfortunately, relief from tension and politics are brief. Yet, they were unique occasions for vast diplomatic movements, illustrated by the visits of foreign rulers. The Exposition 1855 witnessed the visit of Queen Victoria ; it was the first time since the One Hundred Years War that a British ruler took a trip to France, her historical enemy! This step marked the beginning of detente between France and England. Expositions are also good opportunities for people to openly express their political convictions. They were, as we saw, occasions for international gatherings of all sorts, classes, conditions, corporations or interest... It is also during an Exposition that Alexander III (1867) and the Shah of Persia (1900) were almost assassinated by fanatics...

C O N C L U S I O N

"So why mankind has continued to hold such shows? What is the unseen influence that drives humanity to spend its all in producing a bigger, better and even more splendid show than the last one?" (Allwood, 1977).

The great advantage of such Expositions is that they benefited all nations, and promoted the exchange of ideas. Nowadays, however, communication is much improved; information and commerce operate at an international level through specialized and international meetings and all mass media available. Therefore, following the steps of progress, the notion of Exposition has evolved. According to pessimistic opinions at the turn of the century, this pursuit of knowledge, of a result in intellectual improvement, of the merging of all men's interests and attainment of universal peace turned out to be "a glut of facts and of material goods, exposing all the selfish pursuit of wealth and power that motivates society at large" (G. Mandell, 1967). Besides, they became less and less important in terms of trade as a means for national economic expansion but transformed into "commercial" festivals used as ideal frameworks for the development of international public relations.

Thus, from trade to public relations, the Universal Exhibitions often took up the delicate role of sustaining a collapsing nation or of reinstating its "image de marque", its radiance and power. Of course, these demonstrations of pride must be sustained by concepts and ideas rather than displays of goods.

To survive, Universal Exhibitions had to find new ideas to show and new concerns to deal with. The reasons for holding such festivals (costly enterprises) became historic or thematic as devices for a better promotion of public relations. The Columbus Exposition in 1893 celebrated the 400th anniversary of America's discovery; Paris 1989 will celebrate the commemoration of the bicentennial of the French Revolution....

Upon past experience, when technical performances were too much exalted to the detriment of the human condition, the organizers of the last recent Expositions have attempted to reintroduce the human-scale in the scope of their concerns; the Expositions of the 20th century are now named in relation with large and ambitious themes; "For a better World" (Bruxelles 1958), "Man and his World" (Montreal 1967), "Progress in Harmony" (Osaka 1970). Of course, the Universal Exposition of 1867 had already dealt with "social questions"; yet, even though the Saint-Simonists participated in industrial and commercial enterprises as a means to improve the world, their helplessness in the social question stood beside it. "They predicted the development of the world economy, but not of the class struggle" (Walter Benjamin). This inability to integrate the human scale into the Universal Expositions, transcended by a high capitalist society (culminating under the reign of N.III), may explain the withdrawal of France since 1937, meanwhile other nations, in full expansion (USA, Japan...) deliberately turned their Expositions towards commerce and prestige. It is true that the Exposition of Osaka, despite its seductive title, has been accused of having been an luxurious commercial operation. It will be interesting to see how the Exposition of 1989 will deal with the human dimension. In this matter, the French government has already defined clear intentions in choosing the universally renowned date of 1989, Bicentennial of the French Revolution,

and the theme of the Exposition: "Les Chemins de la Liberte" (The paths of Freedom): "In facing the challenges and the dangers of the world, this Exposition will be a bold hopeful message that will recall the forgotten potentials of Science" President Mitterand said. Therefore, Science in the service of Men, the Rights of Men, the World-wide Solidarity, the fundamental Liberties and the many other themes of the Exposition leave no doubt about the humanitarianism and the grandeur of the ideals to be demonstrated in 1989. Where the Saint-Simonists did not succeed, the French socialist government may grandiosely perform (see theme four).

In the light of that above, the answer to Allwood's question seems to rely on the sense of pride and identity always involved in Great Exhibitions. Furthermore, Exhibitions seem to proceed from chauvinistic tendencies more than from a sense of internationalism. To that extent, though, the international context of an Expo is an helpful environment for a full expression of chauvinism; national identity is enhanced by the pride of being the host nation. Of course, the eventual profit the host city can make in terms of tourism and enforcement of its "image de marque" are part of the whole event: a capital has to shine as a capital. But moreover, to be the instigator of such a worldly party demonstrates that the nation can afford it, has things to show, ideas or ideals to express, has a clean conscience; in other words, it shows evidence of an alive nation which still exists on the map.

No doubt, to exhibit is to give a representative image of prosperity, order and peace; it is a magnificent way to show off: this is one of the

mankind characteristics, which finds an opportunity to be fulfilled in the Universal Expositions. Indeed, they are among the most pompous festivals, despite the fact that the pictures of society they have reflected have not always been quite those intended by the organizers!!!

These glittering events, which call for an incredible concourse of people from all over the world, from all social origins, for a variety of reasons, are, according to Allwood, the resurgence a trait of our culture deeply rooted in the past: the need to exhibit ourselves, and under the oldest form: giving a festival.

THE FAIR AND THE CITY

2

The Festival

".... a new and ephemeral city hidden in the center
of another....

.... a whole quarter of Paris... where the buildings
are the masquaraders.... "

Paul Morand, "1900".

The city is an object animated by activities. The activities represent the 'sine qua non' condition of a human being's existence: a man is socially defined by his activities and, therefore, the sum of them constitute his life. But what about the life in the city? What about this pragmatic and monotoneous relationships between men performing, and activities "filling up" the built environment. The prospect of a Fair may drastically change this relationship and introduce a new perception of the city through physical and social alterations.

Manifesto

A Fair does not only occupy a physical space within the city. It also represents the superimposition of an ephemeral life to the everyday life. I insist on the term "superimposition" opposed to "juxtaposition". Modern Fairs have often occurred outside the city, and this for the very practical reasons we can guess (congestion, traffic, accessibility, need of space...). This juxtaposition of "two" towns, the real one and the magic one, is a fact of which we have permanent examples such as DisneyLands and other "parcs d'attraction": magic lands to which one goes for a day, for a thrill, for the kids...Pathetic illusion...if we think of a Universal Exposition that would have to suffer the same condition.

The rational physical organization of a specific area reserved exclusively to extraordinary activities and to self-contained enchantment induces its non-participation to the everyday life. This concentrationary aspect undoubtedly destroys the mythical meaning of a Fair. On the other hand, a Universal Exposition within a city can bring to it what the established everyday life cannot bring anymore.

The imagery of an Exposition is enhanced when it takes place in an environment which has not been made or built a-priori for it. The magic of a Fair 'in town' is that it has to make its own room in an already built environment; it has to integrate new activities among current ones. Fascinating is the idea of a city growing into another, emphasizing the imaginery through a slow process of interference and intersection with the real life and the real space. The progressive transformation of the urban space, the non-defined boundaries between the magic space and the real one generates an osmosis between the two worlds and prolongs the dreamful atmosphere which radiates, therefore, into the whole city...

THE EXPOSITION AND THE FESTIVAL

When Marcel Dassault¹, in April 1978 at the Assemblée Nationale in Paris, suggested that the Government should organize a big Universal Exhibition, he mentioned the benefits the Nation could derive from it. But he also said: "An Exposition, it is a "fete" also. The youth of France would be happy. And then, the French Nation will smile again". During another political meeting which took place in July 1981, he suggested again the idea of a Fair for the Nation, with more success this time: Dassault's speech found a better echo in the socialist Assembly than in the previous one². It is upon this suggestion that the decision to hold a Fair was adopted. In this short address, Dassault leaves no doubt about the entertaining aspect of a Universal Exhibition: "We should add to the pragmatic part of it (the Expo) a sort of Luna Park as they existed before the war. The young people could go there and have fun instead of fighting in the staircases of housing projects." This extremely naive allocation, which made the Assembly and the whole country laugh out loud, holds nevertheless truth to it. Even if the organizers of a Universal Exhibition have pragmatic and specific goals to achieve through it, the potential visitors see in this event an extraordinary opportunity to distract themselves and to have something exciting to talk about. They are in a state of great expectation, hoping for change and something astonishing to occur. In other words, they are, we are all looking forward to enjoying ourselves: "C'est la Fête!"

THE FESTIVAL AND THE TRADITION

As far back as we can look, Fairs and festivals have always been related. The medieval trade fairs are vivid examples. We mentioned already their role in international and political relations among nations. But still, they were not incompatible with a thrilling event.

Most of the big Fairs have their origine in religious celebrations and were organized by the monks of the parrishes. They were occasions for international gatherings of merchants (drapers, haberdashers, beast dealers). Flemmish, Italians, Spanish, French, usually constituted the majority of this cosmopolitan event. They were also unique opportunities for exchanging goods and rare and precious produces. Smells and noise, garish colors, flapping banners and exotism, all contributed to the animation of the place.

The Fairs were usually located at the border of the original town, as a twin town. They were ephemeral artefacts which consisted of shanties, wooden booths, lodings and tents; they were built in such a way as to facilitate their removal and their relocation to the next town. Lasting for a short period of time only, the Fairs would provoke an incredible concourse of people, strollers and entertainers; jugglers, tumblers, jokers, and many others would come and participate in the thrilling ambiance. Along with "buy and sell" activities were organized festivities, games and banquets under the parochial auspices. Spectacles were to interfere much later (18thC.). "The people, which then knew about the dissipation of the private society without having access to it, would look at the time of Fairs as

being the times for amusements. This is the origine of the blending of commerce and recreation" (L. Prud'homme, "Le Miroir historique du nouveau Paris", 1907). These sales cum entertainments were very successful to the point that leisure would often supercede trade. The Fairs were ideal places for meetings or 'rendezvous galants!. The elegant population mixed with the commun crowd often gave rise to odd adventures. This frivolous atmosphere, bordering sometimes on depravation, was still until the latest exhibitions subject to strong criticism from the opponents of fairs in general; the maze garden which surrounded the Palais des Machines in 1867 was famous for its shabby nightly episodes. It is also during the Fairs by the end of the 18thC. that the "theater on the streets" was born, in reaction to the few theater troupes protected and allowed to act by Royal privileges; the street, taken as a decor, witnessed the first steps of the Comedia dell'Arte...

Side by side with populist and local festivals, great public festivals took place. They developed in France in the mid 16th century and inherited the splendor of the medieval "fasti" and the Italian tradition. They reached their apogee under the reign of Louis XIV and during the 18th Century. During that period, various Arts and sophisticated technical means contributed to the elaboration of the festivities; their grandiloquence and ostentation were meant to exalt the Regime and to glorify the Royal person.

Louis XIV played a great part in the tradition of festivals. With him, all political or public acts were blown out of proportion and turned into elaborate theatrical exhibitions. Ceremonies were thrown for the slightest or the highest occasions, weddings or visits of foreign rulers. Paris, with its Rue Royale, Cours La Reine and great plazas, provided the elegant and appropriate setting for the outspread and magnitude of the largest festivities.



1

*The award remittance day
in 1867*

Louis XV and La Regence pursued the tradition of magnificence, but with the accession of Louis XVI to the throne, the pace slowed down. "Paris dances encore, mais Paris a faim et la révolte commence à gronder" ³. The Revolution happened to be the supreme form of Reason after the thousands of follies of the previous reigns; it was to chase away the dissipation and the Fairs.

The Terreur had hardly ended that Paris was "en fête" again; dance halls opened in Paris on the rythm of the "waltze", sounds newly arrived from Vienna. The Directoire gathered on the Boulevards an elegant population whose "tone" was given by Madame Tallien and Joséphine Bonaparte, the wife of a young General... New styles appeared; the "Merveilleuse", graceful and transparent, and the "Incroyable", purposely dressed up with neglect. Both represented the high fashion of those days. "Métamorphose de la ville, elle n'est qu'illusion. Après la dance brutale, Paris maintenant valse" ⁴.

The biggest festivals were to be given by Napoleon I, when he sacred himself "Emperor of France" in 1804. Four dance-floors on the Place de la Concorde, processions and spectacles were set up with great pomp; the aristocracy from all over the world was there, witnessing the ironical fate of France. Also ironical is that David, the painter-organizer of the Revolutionist festivals, was commended for the setting up of the imperial festivities...

Napoleon the Third, less imperial but as grandiloquent as his predecessors, gave a more pragmatic, didactical and political connotations to his public actions; the Universal Exhibitions were to be part of his sense of politics, yet still involving a great deal of amusements and attractions. After the disappointments of

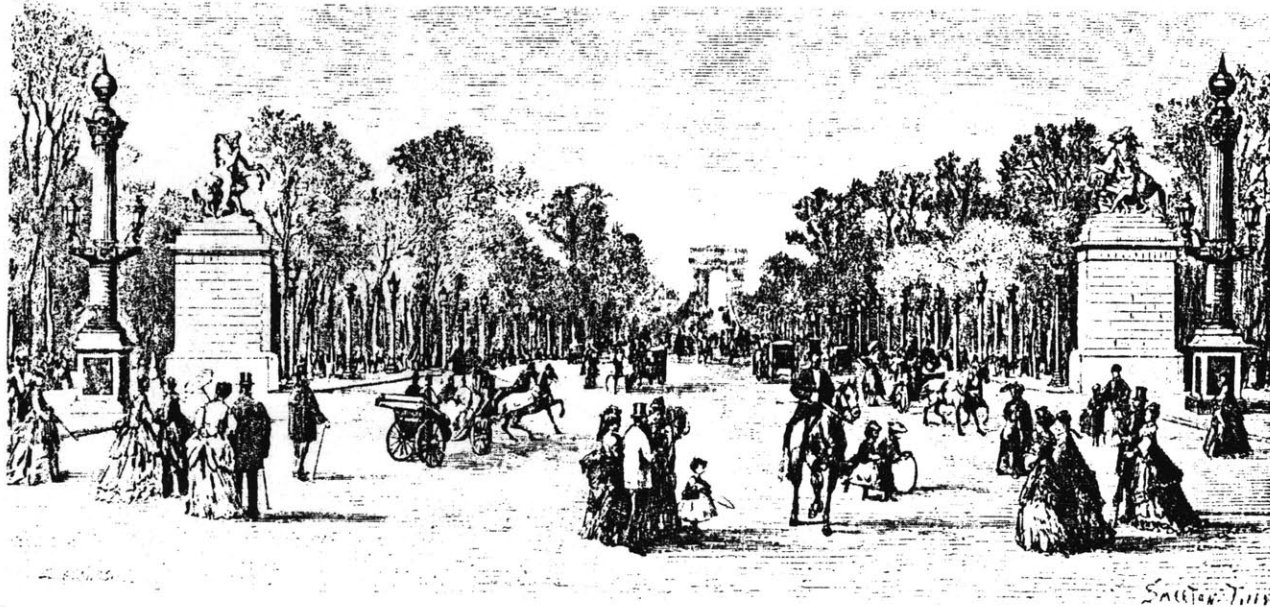
the Socialists in 1848 and having suffered many rebuffs, the Republicans and the Monarchists together constituted the French political majority of that time; it was the beginning of a new era. Cultural explosion, expansion of diplomacy, flourishing of the industry were the symptoms of it, along with the strengthening of Paris as the capital of capitals. Simultaneously, the Parisian scene was changing as described in details by the chronicler J. Prudhome. He depicts the Parisian as discussing politics, enjoying order and progress, theater plays, newspapers and domestic inventions; the whole city is animated by the cafés, the concerts in the open air, the Opéra... Bals are given everywhere at any occasion, often by the governmental institutions themselves. In other words, the power itself organizes and promotes the leisure of the Parisians. Its own conception of festivities is established, alas often to the detriment of the existing live parts of the city.

Still fresh in the Parisians' memory the demolition of the old boulevard du Temple, known as the Boulevard du Crime, the "theater district" of Paris. There the most varied crowd would meet and be entertained by all possible kinds of spectacles. It was on this Boulevard that various forms of theater could be legally performed, shoulder to shoulder, such as the "Théâtre Historique" of Alexandre Dumas, the "Folies Dramatiques", the "Théâtre de La Gaité", all of which are still well known and remembers. Napoleon III wiped them all out, crowds and artists, idlers and acrobates...

The Second Empire inaugurated more sophisticated types of shows and, among others, the "Théâtre des Bouffes Parisiens" (Offenbach) which reached its apogee during the 1855 Universal Exhibition. The Palais des Glaces, the "Bal Mabille", the "Cirque d'Été" and cafes-concerts found a new spot more on the scale of the "City Beautiful"

of Haussmann: the Champs-Elysées. It was on the Champs-Elysées also, and in this festive atmosphere, that the first Universal Exhibition of 1855 was to take birth and place.

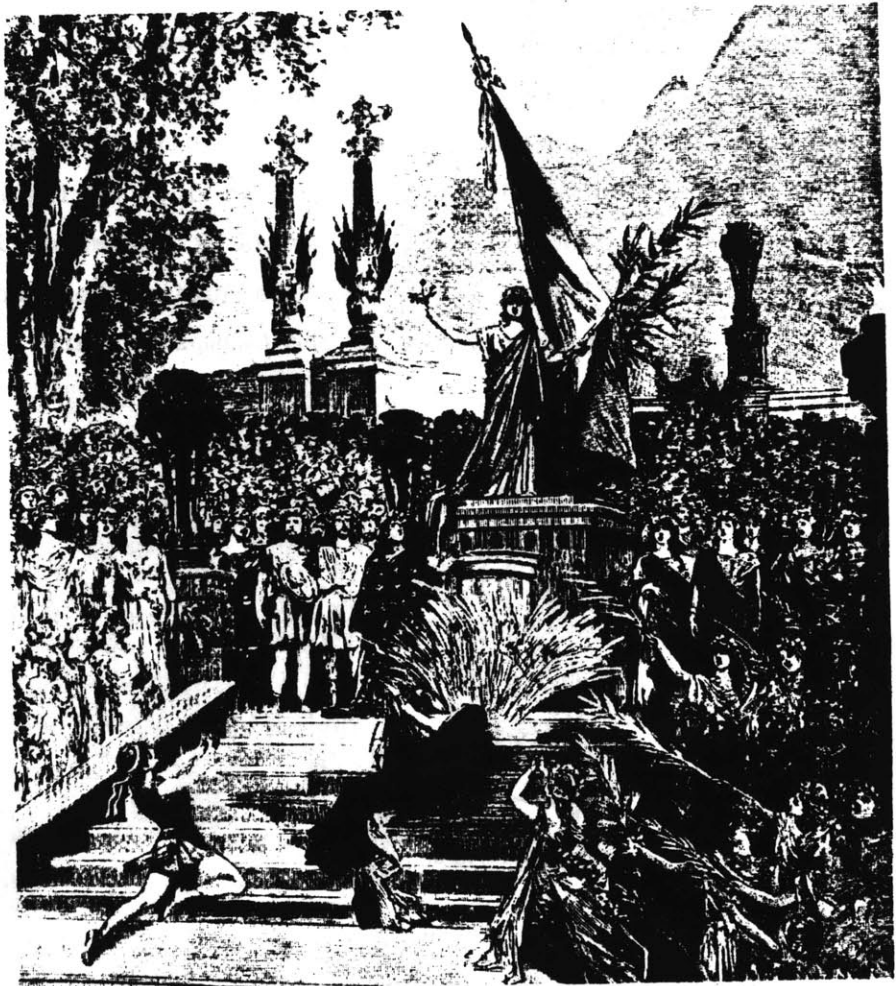
This shift from one center of entertainment to another within Paris was not new; it already had occurred many times, reflecting the trend of the moment. During the 16th Century, the life of Paris was centered on the street Saint Antoine; from 1600, it went to the Place Royale, and to the Pont Neuf in 1700. At the beginning of the 19th Century, it was the Palais Royal which had the greatest concentration of divertissements of all kinds. During the Second Empire, the "Gai Paris" had expanded to several areas at the same time (the Grands Boulevards, the Champs Elysées...) it is also during the Second Empire that the Expositions moved from the Champs Elysées to the Champs de Mars.



2 L'avenue des Champs-Elysées, d'après ALPHAND, *Les Promenades de Paris*.

3

*"Ode a la Liberte"
Centennial of the Revolution,
Paris 1889*



T H E F E S T I V A L A N D T H E C I T Y

The
Festival

The reign of Louis XVI, as mentioned above, witnessed the evolution of the 'fête's' meaning, which was becoming more the expression of the nation's power than that of the Royalty. However, a strong caste division would remain between the aristocratic private fetes and the public ones. Public spaces were (and still are) the pre-dilected places of occurrence for the latter, which were happening under a variety of forms: whether processions, Mass, Te Deum or Mystery plays, they would follow the liturgical calendar or the seasonal celebrations. They were recreations intended for the people, whether on streets or in the countryside, which mixed pagan reminiscences and Christian beliefs, superstitions and folklore... but soon the Revolutionists strived against them.

Indeed, during the period of the French Revolution, the "festival movement" seemed to go in a different direction under the influence of new ideologies. The movement concerned Diderot and Rousseau who attempted to elaborate its theory: the Fêtes should be animated by the unanimous and spontaneous fervor of the people in new settings: "This should be the end of these exclusive spectacles which sadly gather a small number of persons, timorous, inactive and motionless... it is in the open air that you will gather, happy people... Drive a stick in the soil wreathed with flowers, gather the people around... and here you are: you have a 'fête'. Be the actors yourselves and turn the spectators into spectacle!!!" The people become spectators and actors... the spectacle is nowhere and everywhere... the city becomes spectacle and stage at the same time.

The
Space

As an abstract place the city is a dwelling, a commercial practice, a political event, a cultural image, a divertisement ... As a concrete place, the city is an urban system based on a distribution of axis, landmarks, solids and voids, and contrasting or similar spaces. Their interaction generates the life in the city.

A fête has the power of enhancing this symbiosis between the physical environment and the social life within a city. Like in a theater play, the urban pattern includes tense parts and breaks where the pace changes, where action is transformed into emotion. So, the city and its public spaces can serve as a support to the outspread of public rejoicings and festivities. The festival becomes then an urban phenomenon.

But still, the occurrence of a festival, as far as its location is concerned, faces the choice between having a space essentially devoted to festive activities (and, therefore, temporarily used only); and having a space provisionally excluded from the daily space (and, therefore, temporarily privileged). The latter choice is no doubt more appropriate to the urban context; the confrontation between a transient event and a permanent built environment can create a break in space and time; it can generate the requested effects inherent in all festivals, those of escape and enchantment.

Yet, festivities imply a notion of space which has to differ from the daily space as to enhance its sense of spectacle or to enrich its symbolic significance. A Fête, whether Exposition or populist celebration, requires a changing of settings, a staging of the space. So, the transience of a festival calls for a transformation of the space through decors and temporary architectures. Spatial arrangements are needed

to give the visual illusion of a newly appropriated space, reserved to celebration.

Famous architects and urban designers (Bernini, I. Jones, Brunischelli, Servandoni...) were also theater's decorators and festival organizers. This tends to demonstrate the relationships between architecture and festivals. Festive architecture are good occasions for originality and for new research in aesthetics. The absence of constraint of ephemeral architecture allows fantasy, visual effects and can generate a new urban scenography.

Yet, the re-creation of spaces is not always thought of in terms of ephemeral festive architecture. Under the influence of Langier's ideals, the Revolutionists (1790s) attempted to redesign the City, according to principles such as clarity, symmetry and "order with a bit of disorder to vary and enhance the spectacle of the streets" (Langier). The Convention promoted the Commission des Artistes; the committee was in charge with the urban project for a new Paris which would rival Roma Antica and yet be designed for the people. The project was worked on for years but not worked out; yet, it greatly contributed to the grand transformations undertaken during the 19thC. Indeed, it was the prefiguration of the Haussmannian works, although Haussmann's concepts tended more toward a pattern that fitted the dominant class logic, opposing banal and private spaces to hypervalorized and monumental public spaces. Nevertheless, the ideological concepts of the Revolution and the concretized policies of the 2nd Empire, the festive processions of the former and the military de-files of the latter both contributed to improve the weaknesses of the still medieval, cramped and congested urban fabric of Paris. The Revolution has been somehow the link between the Ancien Regime, ideas conceivers, and the Empire which materialized them. Indeed the Ancien Regime through to the Restauration period accumulated for

70 years a tremendous amount of ideas on the paper; they have been recuperated, specially that of a global "embellishment" plan for the whole city, by the Fourierists and the Saint-Simonists thinking under the Restauration. Haussmann will be the first to give them shape...

Whereas the Revolutionists, unable to implement their urban concepts, urged for asserting their power through spectacular but temporary physical interventions of the Second Empire spent about fifteen years in transforming the city for the sake of posterity. The decongested city could now receive large public festivities in the wide open air.

The Festival
and
The City

Traditionally, festivals have often invested the urban space, yet not in totality. The outspread of the festivities may proceed from a hierachic selection of places amidst the urban fabric, where various activities take place. These key spaces are linked together through processions and crowd's motion which progress from a spot to the other. The course of the fête is marked by temporary physical elements set up for the festival's purpose.

The Palio in Siena (Italy) shows how the festival's animation, centered on the Piazza di Campo, also radiates in the town along symbolic paths. The Revolutionists of the end of the 18th Century would also take in account the whole "urban landscape" and its potentials of transformation for the setting up of their festivals. The key sites would be located in opposite directions, at the limits of the city, while defiles and processions would cross through the city from a site to the other (Champs de Mars, Place de La Bastille...).

The selection of the main festive areas proceeds from a deliberate choice. It in-

tends to reflect the ruler's concerns for the organization of the country and its physical structure. It has the constructive value of mobilization and political education. The Campo in Siena has a historical and political meaning. The choice of the areas for the Revolutionary festivals had the same importance: the spaces that were formerly devoted to monarchical celebrations were denied by the Revolutionists; they appropriated to themselves new spaces which would then better symbolize their ideologies. We shall see later on how the relations between the festival and the city evolved, as far as Expositions are concerned.

T H E E X P O S I T I O N A N D T H E C I T Y

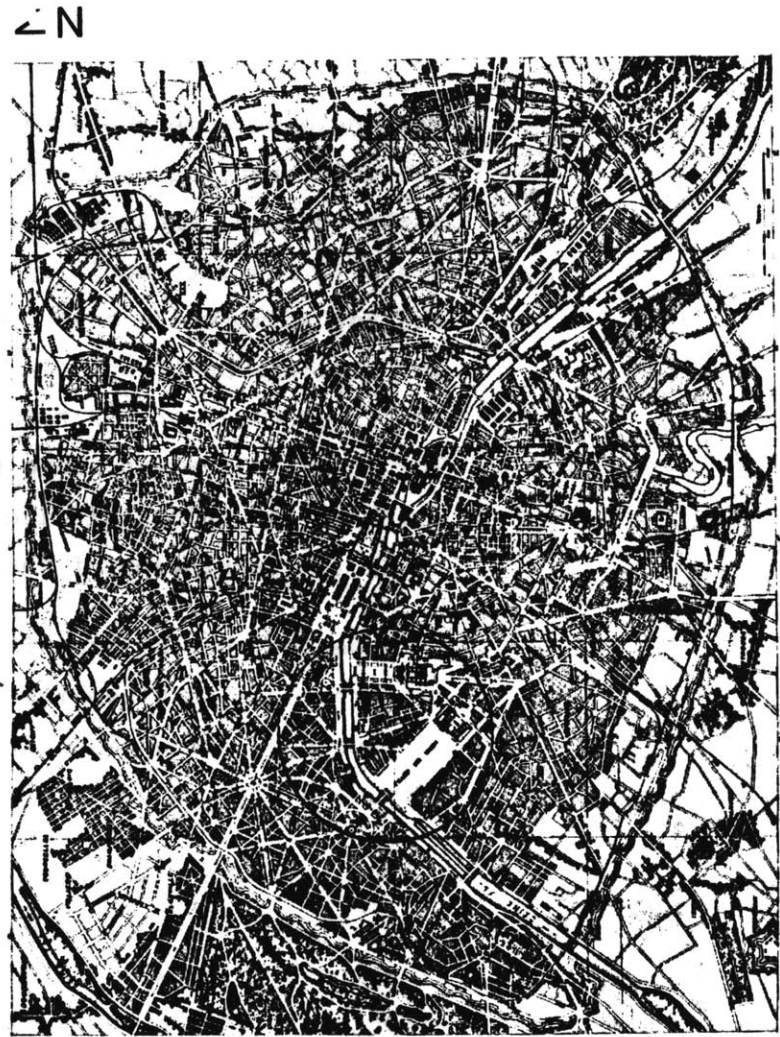
How could we comprehend the impacts of a Universal Exposition on the city, without the understanding of the interactions and relationships between fairs, festival, market places, exhibition of all sorts, and the City herself? As early as the 12th century, the city modified its topology and its economic organization. The church was not anymore the center of the town, although it still was the privileged place for meetings and festivals such as the feast of the fools. The market place became the live center of the town as shown in the "bastide-cities" of the south of France. The market place was where the exchange of goods and ideas would occur, and where the cultural and political life of the town would take place; the market place was the civic representation of the town.

In a sense, when an Exposition takes place in the city, the interaction between the two creates also a symbiotic relationship. Like a City, an Exposition is a place of exchange, communication, knowledge, culture and leisure. It is a city in the city, and both contribute to the "radiance" of one another.

Whereas elsewhere Expositions usually occur outside or at the border of the host city, French Expositions have always taken place "within" Paris. As a result, the relationships between Paris and its Expositions have a special status and the association of the three words Universal-Exposition-Paris is unique. From the point of view of the Government, it is the word "Universal" (or international) which counts the most, and this because of the motivations discussed in "theme one." As far as the City's Officials are concerned, it is the word "Exposition" which prevails. For



4. Paris 1853



Paris 1873 5.

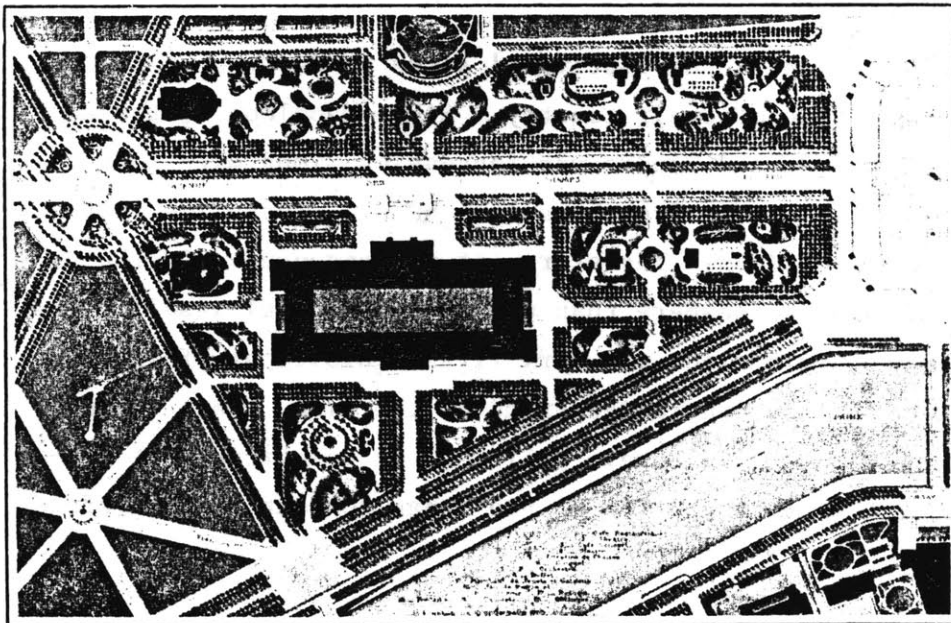
them, it is a matter of propaganda or publicity designed to enhance the fame of the city for tourism and local commerce. For the City, the Exposition could be a luxurious trade fair as well. In some ways, it is the city herself and her rulers that tend to deviate the Exposition from its prime objectives and turn it into a town fair (see Theme one). For the visitors, the strangers, the provincials and for the Parisians themselves, the justification of such an event is contained in the union of the Exposition and the City of Paris: "Ils se réjouissent à l'idée d'atteindre la cité de carton armé et de plâtre par cette avenue permanente de pierre qu'est Paris. Ils ne viennent pas voir un Paris déguisé, une ville travestie...En un mot, l'attrait pour eux est ce jumelage passager d'une ville éphémère et d'une ville millénaire, de la cité la plus excentrique et la plus imaginaire avec la capitale du monde la plus réelle et la plus humainement assise" (Jean Giraudoux, 1934).⁵ These three points of view presuppose the coexistence of Paris with the Exhibition and not their obscure juxtaposition.

The
Expositions
and their
Sites

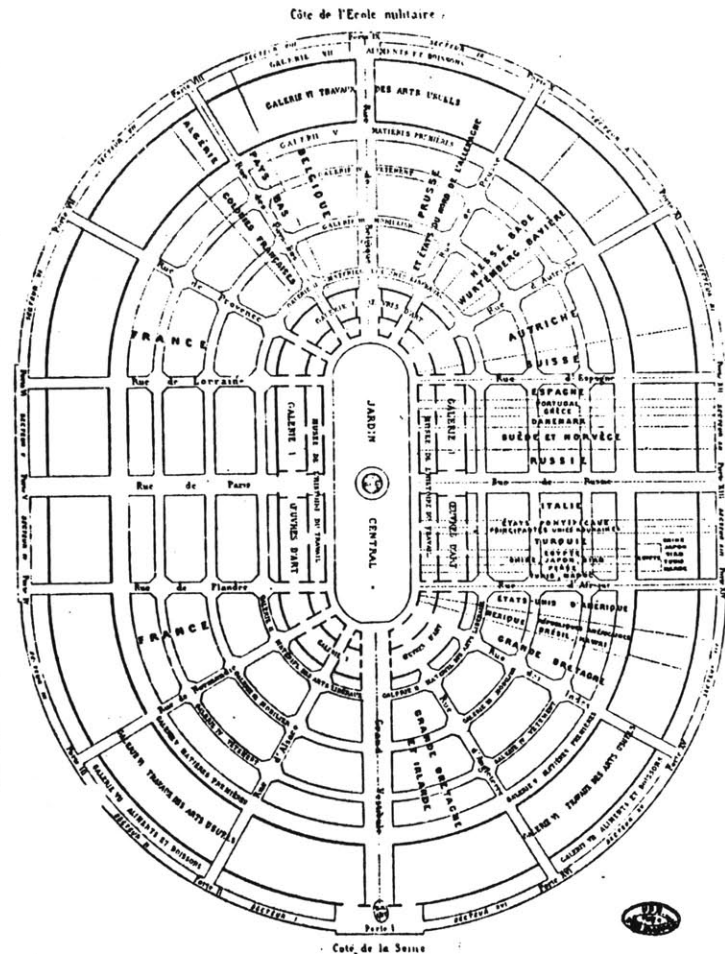
As we mentioned before, the selection of the festivals' sites tends to reflect the rulers' concerns for the organization of their country. Since Napoleon I, the administrative centralization of the Second Empire was increasing along with intellectual and industrial concentration. The French capital had to assume its position within the country and among nations. Therefore, it was unconceivable that a Universal Exposition would take place elsewhere than within the capital itself. The location "intra-muros" became the rule since the very first Exhibitions, following on with the festival tradition and the centralist trend of the time. Yet, whatever the concept of an Exposition is, either cultural, political or commercial, it necessitates wide and free space; the heavy density of the urban context is, therefore,

" To make a circuit of this place, circular, like the Equator, is literally to go around the World. All people are here, enemies live in peace side by side. As in the beginning of things, on the globe of waters, the divine spirit now floats on this globe of iron."
 (Victor Hugo in the introduction for "Lacroix-Paris Guide", 1867).

6. Building of the Expo 1855 on the Champs Elysees



7. The building of the Expo 1867 on the Champs de Mars



the main constraint as far as the Exposition's site is concerned. Factors such as the type, symbolism or motivations of festivals intervene in the selection of the sites: the traditional festivals would most likely punctuate the whole city whereas the grandiose festivities organized by the rulers would take place almost outside the city, where wide open spaces were available.

The Universal Exhibitions emerged with the first development of urbanization. Since they were reflecting the image of the capital, it was important that the Expositions be located in one of the most prestigious area in order to carry out their full significance. But, even when Haussmann decongested the city, the older part of Paris remained heavily dense; meanwhile, the surroundings were rapidly expanding though preserving wide spaces. That is why the first Universal Exposition could be located within Paris itself but not in its very center. The recent "Carre Marigny" on the Champs Elysees, usually devoted to open air games, was perfectly proportioned to welcome the rectangular building of the Expo 1855.

In 1867, the situation was slightly different. During the past 15 years, the city had considerably expanded and the second Exposition needed more space than the first. The Expo 1867 was located on the Champs de Mars, which was already imprinted with symbolism since the Revolutionist period. In 1792, the Champs de Mars was still outside the walls of Paris. In 1867, it was almost included within Paris' administrative limits, while its neighborhoods were rapidly building up. Thereafter, it became the focal point of the next Universal Expositions. As in 1855, the Exposition is almost self-contained in a single elliptic building made of glass and iron. The spatial arrangement of the displays is made according to the most logical and rational classification: if one wants to see all the products of a single country, one has to follow a radiant of the ellipse; if one wishes to compare a single type

of products from different countries, one has to follow a perimeter of the ellipse. It was a seductive unitary conception which nevertheless had its limitations. To the great despair of the St. Simonists, a single building based upon such a stiff and rational distribution could not contain the entire Exposition; the services and appendages had to be rejected outside its glass-walls along with the International Pavilions. The idea of unity and concentration was, therefore, spoiled and the surroundings of the main building as well.

From then on, the size of the Exposition grew commensurately to their greater success. Since 1867, the physical configuration of the Expositions transformed, each time taking over more space at the border of hypertrophia. The original site began to expand across the river, providing huge vistas which still remain as master pieces in the Parisian urban composition.

1855: the lower side of the Champs Elysees.

1867: The Champs de Mars

1878: The Champs de Mars + the Chaillot Hill

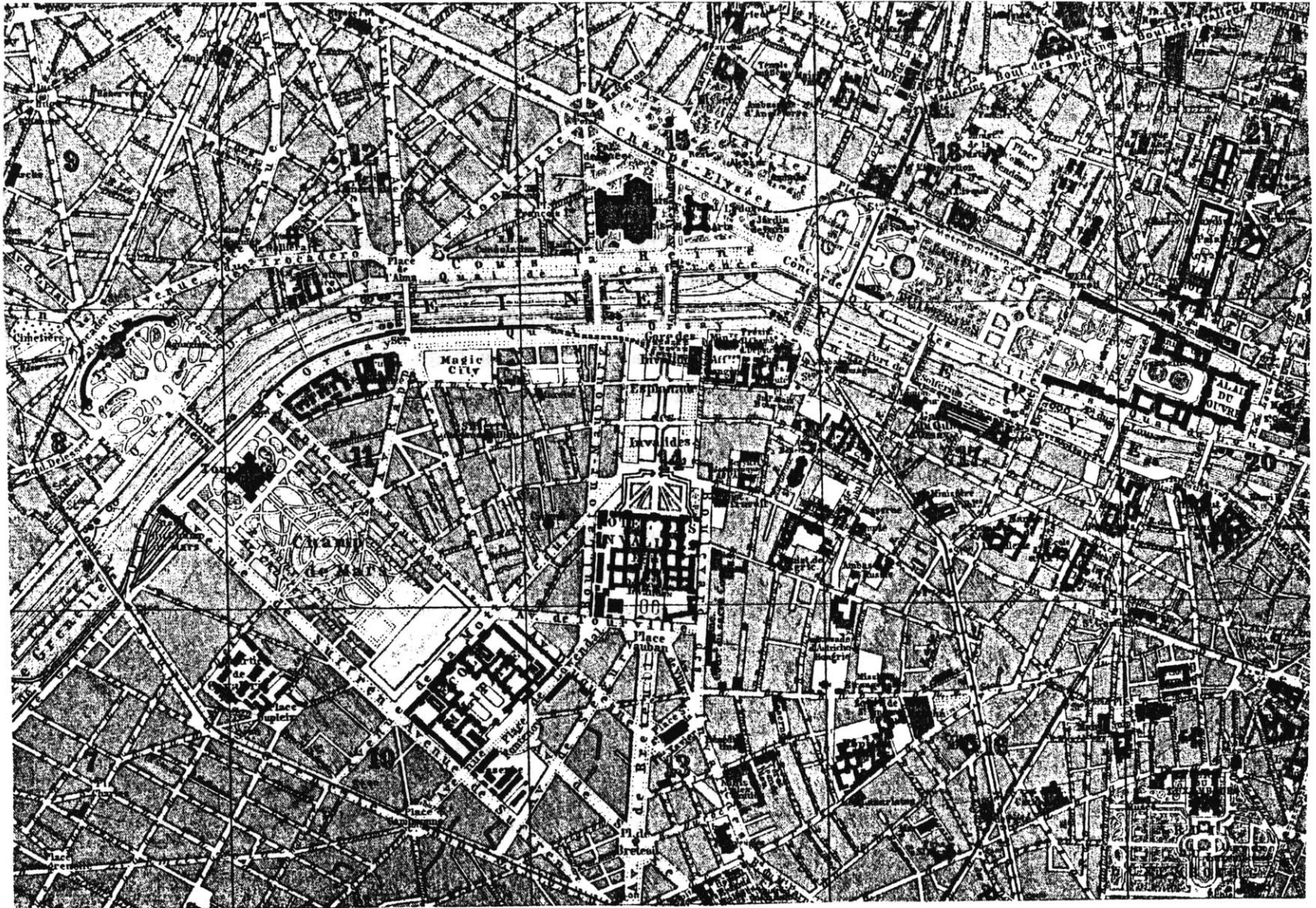
1889: 1878 + the esplanade of the Invalides and the whole left-bank between the Invalides and the Champs de Mars.

1900: 1855 + 1889 + the right bank between both.

1937: 1900 + annexes.⁶

In correlation to this evolution, the Expositions were losing their previous formal shape; from the free-standing building of 1855, they began to split up into proliferating pavilions of different themes and styles. Their interference with the city was gradually increasing, like a tentacle disease; it also marked an evolution toward thematic Expositions.

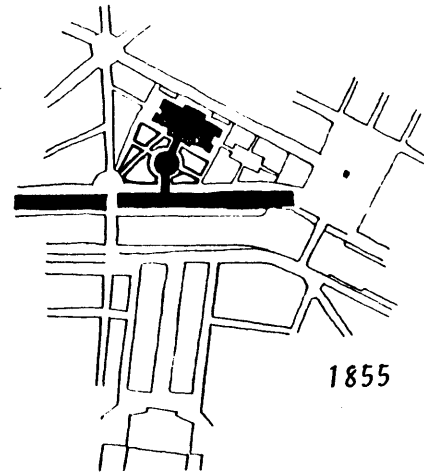
8. The sites' Expositions: the Champs de Mars and the Esplanade des Invalides



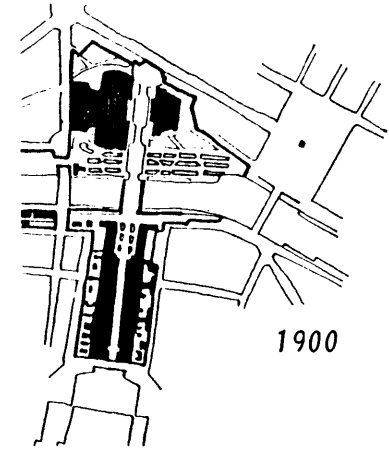
USE OF THE SPACE

The Champs Elysees and the
Esplannade des Invalides .

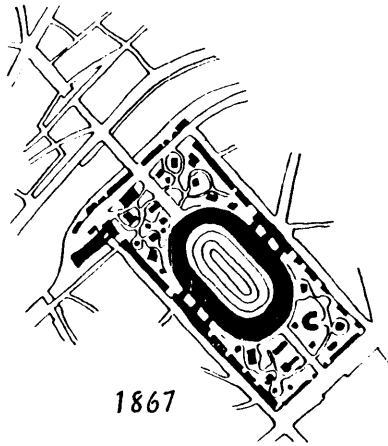
9.



1855



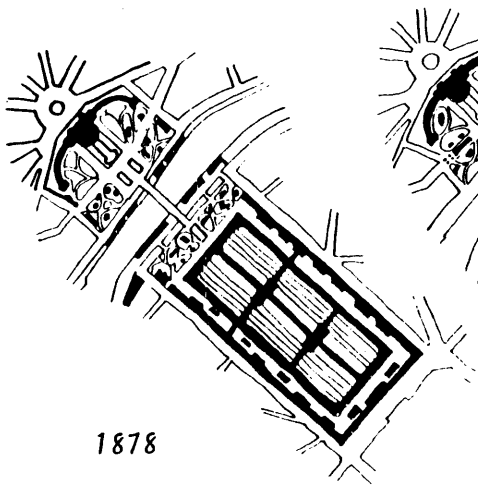
1900



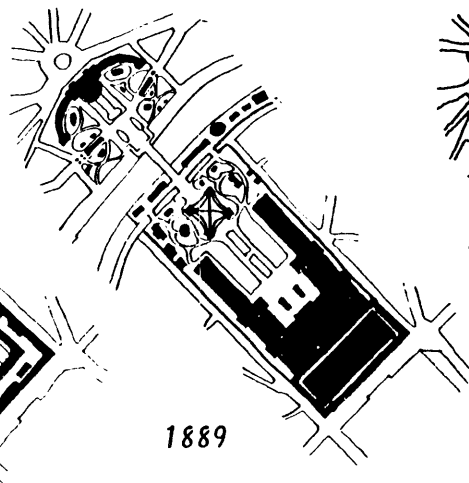
1867

The Champs de Mars.

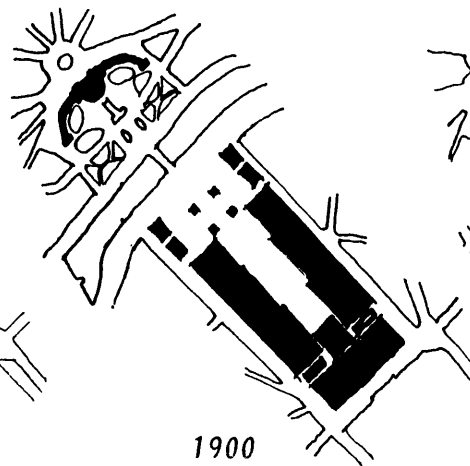
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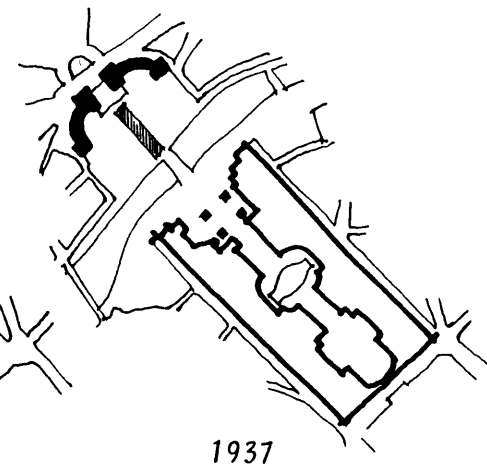
1878



1889



1900



1937

In the light of such a strong tradition in the development of the Parisian Expositions, it becomes unconceivable to reject their sites outside the city. As far as the Expo 1989 is concerned, the "centralization" of the Exposition outside the limits of Paris on a predesigned site would proceed from a misunderstanding of the Expositions phenomenon. Yet, given the actual physical aspect of Paris nowadays, it is necessary to consider solutions which would consist of a more conceptualized "decentralization" of the Expo within Paris itself. It is true that Paris has preserved open spaces still large enough to exhibit; but the density has become such that they are of prime necessity to the survival of the city and to counter the effects of its proliferation. The center would not afford a superimposed congestion of any type, even temporarily. Otherwise, the city would asphyxiate.

Decentralization
And
Centralization

The last modern Expositions, Brussels 1958, Montreal 1967, Osaka 1970, have barely raised the issue of the relationships between the Exposition and the City because they were located outside the urban agglomeration. Concentrating the Exposition's grounds outside the city seems at a quick glance to be the wisest choice. It prevents from dealing with the delicate issue of integrating an Exposition into an already built environment; it solves many problems such as transportation, communication, access, absorption of millions of visitors, implementation of structures and infrastructures on free lands, etc... Free from physical constraints, this choice allows to take liberties, such as fantasy, or building a "never, never land" which would last "forever and ever", that of creating an artifact parallel to the real life.

The supporters of decentralization have opinions worth mentioning. Forseeing the disorders the Expo 1937 (to be located intra-muros as usual) would induce, Jean

Giraudoux wrote a series of editorials aiming at convincing the Expo's organizers to set up the festival beyond the borders of Paris. The realism and accuracy of his argument is evident.

A huge worksite going on for a number of years until the Exposition's opening may paralyze the city and its vital functions. *During the Exposition's days, all the activities of the city are centered around the festival, which is another form of paralysis. But the main point of the decentralists' argumentation is that a removed Exposition would bring better benefits to the city itself than a central Exposition. *Instead of erecting temporary buildings that would become obsolete afterward, it would be more profitable and money-saving to set durable buildings and infrastructures that will remain after the Exposition is gone. *These Exposition buildings would then serve as nuclei for the developing of new communities, or as elements for restructuring the informal outskirts of Paris.

Indeed, the physical arrangements necessitated by the implementation of the previous Expositions contributed to the physical improvement (see Theme Three). But the city has now reached a point where its spatial configuration seems as though frozen for decades (until Haussmann II?); thus, such implementations should be now addressed to the unshaped areas nearby Paris in order to remodel and to give them character and a sense of identity; the 'Expositions' buildings should stand as pieces of our cultural patrimony beyond the limits of the capital.

A vivid illustration of a decentralist attitude is the case of Brussels/Expo 1935. The choice of the site for the Expo 1935 proceeded from a strong will to deal with the urban growth that occurred since WWI: at that time, one could read that the organizers of the Expo wanted to undertake a durable enter-

prise: a whole new quarter would spring out in a few months after the Expo is over; around the big remaining palaces, the quarter of the "Centenaire" would develop with its axis, its vast roads system, its forest-like park and its stadium; eventually, the capital would greatly grow thanks to the new access roads which linked the city to the new area, "the jewel of the city Brussels." ⁷

Twenty three years later, unfortunately, the expected magnificent development of Brussels still had not occurred, and the Expo 1958 could relocate on the same site!! The Exposition had not played its role of urban catalyst; at least, some of the buildings were reutilized for the Expo 1958. Apparently, none of the modern Universal Expositions was able to deal with its "decentralism". Not only they could not contribute to any kind of urban developments, but also they vanished after the closing day with an after taste of uselessness and desolation. The Columbus Exposition of 1893 went up in smoke (except the Palace of Fine Arts, sole remainder of both Expositions, 1893 and 1933) the NY Fairground is nowadays in ruins; from Brussels 1958, the symbolic/atomic sculpture is the only trace of the vanished Exposition. Montreal is still repaying its debts for the Expo 1967 and, therefore, cannot concretize its Fairground's rehabilitation project.

This sceptical attitude regarding the so-called advantages of a decentralization Exposition does not stand for the acknowledgement of the opposite configuration (e.g., centralization). A Universal Exposition located in an urban agglomeration induces also all kinds of issues: Insertion (sites), scale and integration (aesthetics), absorption (crowds and structures) and congestion (traffic, activities) are the problems (nowadays more crucial than ever) inherent in the 'phenomenon' of a 'city' growing into another; it implies that the Expo has to face the reality of a con-

straining physical environment and its characteristics (density, immobility, beauty...) Until 1937, tradition transcended all of the issues above: the Expo had to occur in Paris on its original sites no matter what inconveniences it brought to the city.

Under the influence of decentralist opinions, the Expo 1937 was the first to seriously consider the issue of centralization. Numerous annexes were set up at the border of Paris (Vincennes, Maillot...) while mini-Expos were organized in various provincial cities. Besides, the Front Populaire was concerned with the revival of the vanished tradition of great festivals. Indeed, the Third Republic of the 30's promoted more civic festivals than ever (Fetes des Fleurs, Fetes Venetiennes, Fetes Sportives...). The Expo had a whole section devoted to the "Art des Fetes". Moreover, it innovated a new type of relationship between the Expo and the City, but which lasted only for one single day: July 14. During that day, one could attend openair spectacles (theater plays, operas, shows...) in almost every big squares of Paris. This form of popularization of Culture was also the first step towards a revival of neighborhoods' animation. However, the core of the festivities took place once again on the same original site.

11.
*La Fete des Fleurs,
Paris, 1900*



C O N C L U S I O N

In 1989, fifty years from then will have passed. It is still appropriate to follow the tradition of congesting what has become now the real center of the city (since the broad expansion of Paris toward the south-west)? Besides, it seems foregone for an Exposition which is supposed to retrace half a century of progress and to be symbolic of a new era, to be relocated always on the same old site, ignoring the notion of evolution carried out by the event.

A new Approach

To that extent, the Universal Exposition of 1989 in Paris will undoubtedly innovate a new type of approach, based on the combination of both configuration: centralization and decentralization. The Expo 1989 will take place in the city of Paris itself but will not occupy the center as before. The innovative characteristic of the Expo is that it will be simultaneously located on two sites, at the limits of Paris, along the Seine, but opposite to one another. This approach represents an audacious attempt to revitalize two of the most neglected quarters of Paris, during and after the Exposition days and also to decongest the center of Paris (see Theme Four).

On the long run, this Exposition intends to introduce a change in the physical aspect of Paris and to improve it in order to rearticulate and to re-equilibrate the whole city: ambitious plans, if we think that it is the first time the implementation of an Exposition will attempt to deal with an entire urban agglomeration. Such a conceptualization in the planning of a fair may at last resume with the festival's tradition in Paris: the distribution of the Exposition's activities along the main

connecting paths between the two sites will supposedly contribute to the interference between the City and the Exposition, between the dream and the real life...

But moreover, this ambitious plan acts at higher levels. These transformations made to support a temporary event intend to leave a lasting imprint on the City of Paris. They will be the witnesses of the 80's, the Socialist years. Besides being the expression of great ideals, the transformations of the city under each reign were also intended to impress the city for the posterity, to recall to the collective memory the passage of temporary regimes.

Thus, Expositions, like Regimes or human lives, are temporary events struggling for posterity. This is one aspect of the decentralists' intentions. A removed Exposition would allow the site to remain forever and to be reutilized for cultural needs or as elements or urban growth. An Exposition "in the city" calls for another type of approach. The structures have to disappear so that the city can recover its previous aspect and mode of life.

The above tends to demonstrate that "decentralization means permanence" whereas "centralization means transience." Nevertheless, this apparent antagonism between the two concepts holds a sort of ambiguity. We saw already that reality has often contradicted the former: decentralization has meant until now permanent desolated sites or permanent uselessness. We shall see that the latter concept may also quite differ. Even though all Expositions (whether outside or within the City) are ephemeral, their transience may leave enduring traces and imprints, particularly within the urban context.

THE TIME OF AN EXPOSITION

3

A sense of Time.

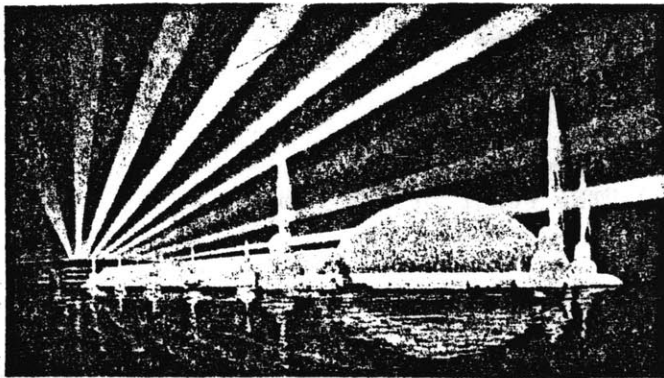
"... In festivities, man relives
and anticipates...."

Harvey Cox
"The Feast of the Fools"

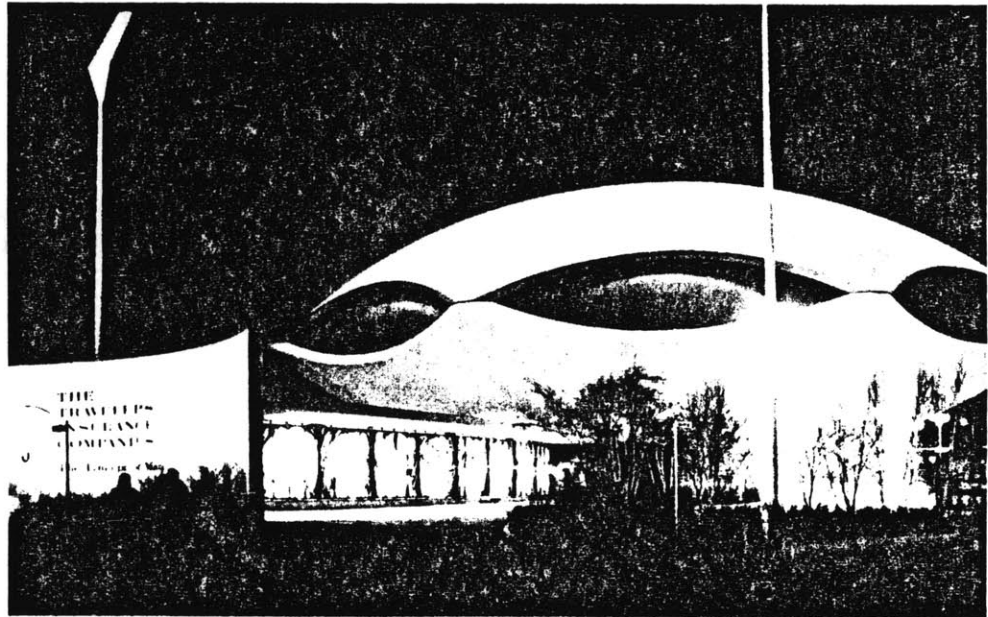
*Futurism at the Expo Chicago 1933
and at the Expo NY 1964/65.*

2

1



THE GIANT NEW FOUNTAIN TWO BLOCKS LONG THAT FEATURES THIS YEAR'S FAIR
This great fountain four blocks long is the outstanding of the grounds, with a brilliant background. It extends
center of A Century of Progress, 1933. For the benefit of southward into the north lagoon from the 12th street bridge
colored light, similar to the '33 display of the south end. A mammoth dash of water plays at the lower tip.



Whether expressions of civilization's progress or humanistic ideals, whether attempts to educate people, to work out diplomatic crisis, or to heighten the radiance of a Nation, Universal Expositions have always attempted to solve present problems for a better future. They show how the future civilization should be; they may not look toward a planned civilization but toward one which is in the process of formation and in which every part acts upon all the others. To some extent, the Universal Expositions seem to convey the impression that they are actually set up by men of the future for the men of the present. Most of the displays, especially the spectacular ones, are put up to confirm this impression. The "Palace of Electricity" in 1900 looked as if it had come from another planet, giving way to unimaginable prospects for industry and domestic comfort.... Magic and Futurism are part of one another and this association becomes the symbol of a better future, a future which will bring joy and wealth to everybody; this symbol suggests that mechanism, modernism, and computerism may also manufacture this thing called happiness (following the former concepts of "optimism, industrialism, paternalism" as key for happiness in the mid-19th century).

We saw already that Universal Expositions are usually moved by great ideals. They demonstrate the preoccupations of the intellectuals of their eras to expand scientific knowledge, to promote universal education and to restore national pride.... Despite the fact that they suffered many losses, failures or disillusion, the Universal Expositions are still the manifestation of this positivist faith, faith

in material and scientific progress as panaceas for all men's ills, faith in the equilibrium of nature and culture as moral benefits for the society and hopes for social reforms as a means for peace all over the world. The achievements of such ideals were shown as doubtful in THEME ONE because "reality" often deviated from "theory", particularly after the Fair was gone.

Yet, The Saint-Simonist's positivism remains underlying as the invisible force which drives human beings forward... Utopia, fantasy and hopes are traits of the human nature, as well as the perception of a future, without which the present would have no value.¹ According to Harvey Cox, "Utopia thinking is to the corporate human community what Fantasy is to the individual person." Besides, the future is an intangible dimension that can be grasped only through a process of projection, a form of Fantasy.²

"Fantasy like festivity reveals man's capacity to go beyond the empirical world of the now and the here. In festivity, man relives and anticipates..." (Harvey Cox)

To that extent, the festival of a Universal Exposition represents the most formidable summations of society's hopes. A Universal Exposition is among the rare events which are able to gather, in the same time and in the same place, people from all conditions and all classes; they are for a moment melted all together in the same crowd and introduced to the supreme state of modern revelation: "Progress", inspired by a spirit of permanent innovation, generating comfort, social promotion and concord among classes...

A Universal Exposition could be defined by its unity of time, its unity of action and its unity of place, like a classical tragic drama, like a self-contained world, like a fragment of utopia... It is an eccentric event because, by its very concentration and selection of features of the civilization, it must necessarily distort. Eccentric also because it is an event which occurs at the border of the past and of the future in the same time. It represents the summary of a past epoch and the point of development at which society has arrived; it also gives a snapshot vision of a future era. A Universal Exposition is almost a geometrically defined point where/when past and future meet and where/when the notion of present is absent. But because it emphasizes the future more than the past, it is like an enclave of one kind of civilization hemmed in by another. In this enclave, the perception of time compresses to the point that the future seems to spring out from the past in one shot, as if by magic, meanwhile real life follows its course outside the world of the Fair. Parallel to the microcosmic universality of an Exposition, the continuous line of real life ineluctably progresses each day forward upon the past, slowly advancing; this line rarely stops to take a break in its course, to examine the time that has passed and to project us all of a sudden in a new era. But a Universal Exposition does it, and to take upon itself its role of retrospection and fantasy, it has to be ephemeral.

Ephemeral
Vs.
Perennial

Would the visitors feel as much excited and impatient to go and see an Exposition if they knew it were to remain in place for years? Why would an Exposition call such a tremendous concourse of people from all over the world to the same place at the same time if the Expo was to be ongoing? The appeal of such an event comes because it does occur once in a while and does not last forever. The festive quality of a "festival" depends on its being exceptional.

As soon as the first exhibition, in 1855, the principle of holding Universal Exhibitions was criticized. Prince Napoleon (cousin of Napoleon III), considering the financial loss of the operation, the impartiality of the awards³ and the planning of the Exposition Building, claimed that the days of the Great Exhibitions were numbered; he also suggested that they should be smaller, more specialized and... permanent. In 1867, LePlay, disillusioned for the same reasons, expressed the same suggestions; they thought that Exhibitions should be permanent and designed "for initiated and serious visitors"; to some extent, they should be like our technical museums of today. But what are museums, besides being collections and displays of "dead things"? The concept of "museum" necessarily implies a notion of past, or a notion of present that belongs already to the past, or a notion of future that becomes present as soon as it is displayed...

As far as Expositions are concerned, these ideas about permanence never got off the ground. These concepts could take place at a time when the course of events and progress was slow. Now, more than ever, Expositions have to be rapidly up to date, meanwhile museums are permanently devoted to witnessing past and present time. In being permanent, Expositions would lose their "future-oriented" significance. Ephemeralness allows flexibility in following (if not preceeding) the steps of progress, in expressing ideals and concerns of the time being, in envisioning the future at a determined point in time. Besides, the Expositions' organizers always knew that the spirit of the Expositions, in being permanent, would fade away and make the enterprises unsuccessful.

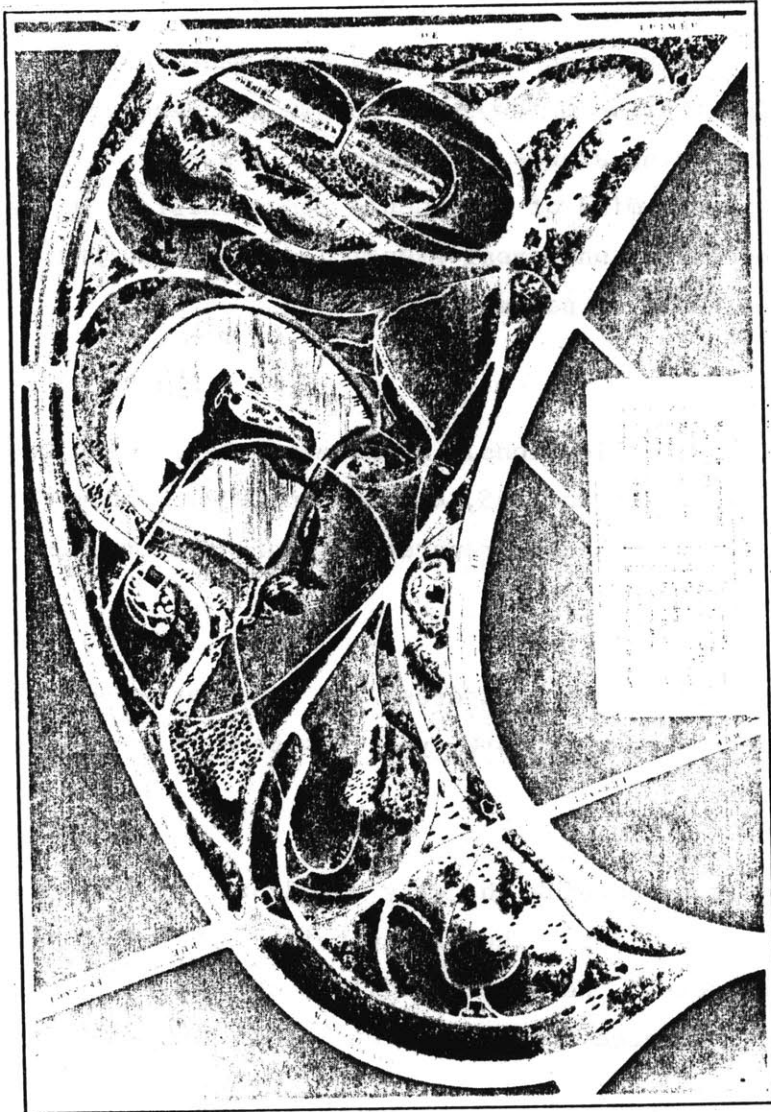
From an intellectual point of view, ephemeralness is no doubt the most appealing and wonderful characteristic of the Exposition's phenomenon. However, we must admit that it is also the most dramatic aspect of the whole enterprise when considered from the financial and physical points of view as well. Many have made terrible losses, and even more have left behind them unemployment problems and desolated sites. They can mask ambitions, be stepping stones to triumph or disaster. They can succeed or fail, live indelibly in the mind of the people and in history or be immediately forgotten. Indeed, a successful universal exposition impresses the collective memory and enters then the realm of posterity.

Ephemeral
And
Perennial

A Festival may be ephemeral, but not its implications. A Universal Exposition has to be planned a long time in advance (2 years in 1855, 8 years in 1937); ephemeralness takes time to prepare. It is also during the preparation years that the Exposition's projected results are delineated.

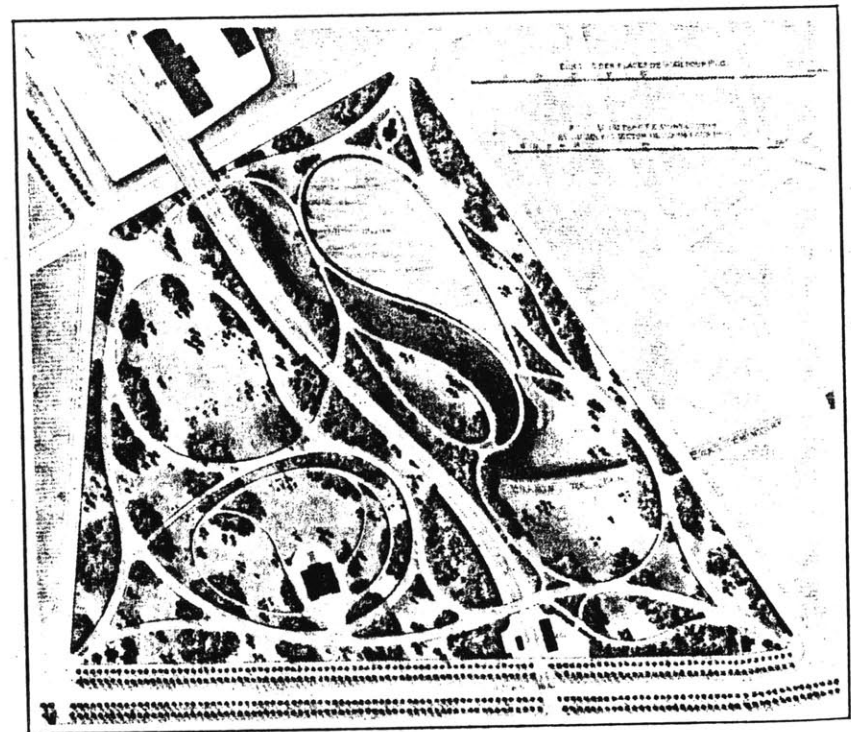
The difficulty of the preparation is that it has to address the apparent duality of implementing permanent structural changes which are, yet, designed to support temporary construction for a transitory event.

The decentralists claim that an Exposition outside the city would provide structures able to remain permanently and to be reutilized. They are considering "permanence" as the logical following to "ephemeralness." We saw the failure of this logic. In the city, the situation is different. Because the Exposition has to deal with an already permanent environment, the dilemma between permanent and temporary is even more crucial .



3. The Parc des Buttes Chaumont,
Paris, 1867

4. The Parc Montsouris. Paris 1878



Whereas the remote Expositions have always been ephemeral in all aspects (structures, use and results, even), the Expositions in town have left enduring traces; whereas the former attempted to contribute to the expansion of the host city, the latter actually contributed to the improvement of it.

Thus, the sort of paradoxe which lies between the transience of a festival and the implementation of long terms goals may give way to a fruitfull interaction between the Expo and the City beyond the closing day.

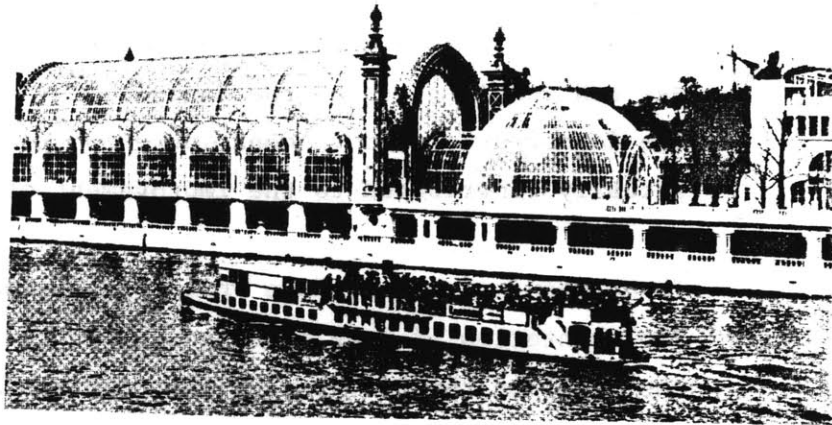
Permanence
Of
Infrastructures

Each Exhibition was an opportunity to create impetus for energies to be channelled into the improvement of Paris. The two first Expositions, in 1855 and 1867, did not involve great transformations. Nevertheless, the Expo 1867 consecrated the achievement of Haussmann's work. Although the Exposition was not part of the general reorganization and profound alteration of the Parisian urban fabric, it was at least through it that the Haussmannized Paris was to be famous and imitated as the best urban model. The Expo 1867 was a unique opportunity to come and discover a new and astonishing Paris: 1867 was the symbol of a magnificent modernity.

The following Expositions, besides the ephemeral transformation inherent in these types of festivals, left behind them tangible traces which have been totally absorbed by the urban fabric of today. Thanks to Alphand and the immense work of the Services des plantations, the Parc des Buttes Chaumont and the Parc Montsouris were respectively ready in time for the inauguration of the Exhibitions 1867 and 1878. Among the little known physical influences of the Universal Exhibition is the total remodelling of the Seine's banks on both sides (between the two bridges of La Concorde and Bir-Hakeim). The city still greatly benefits from this traffic

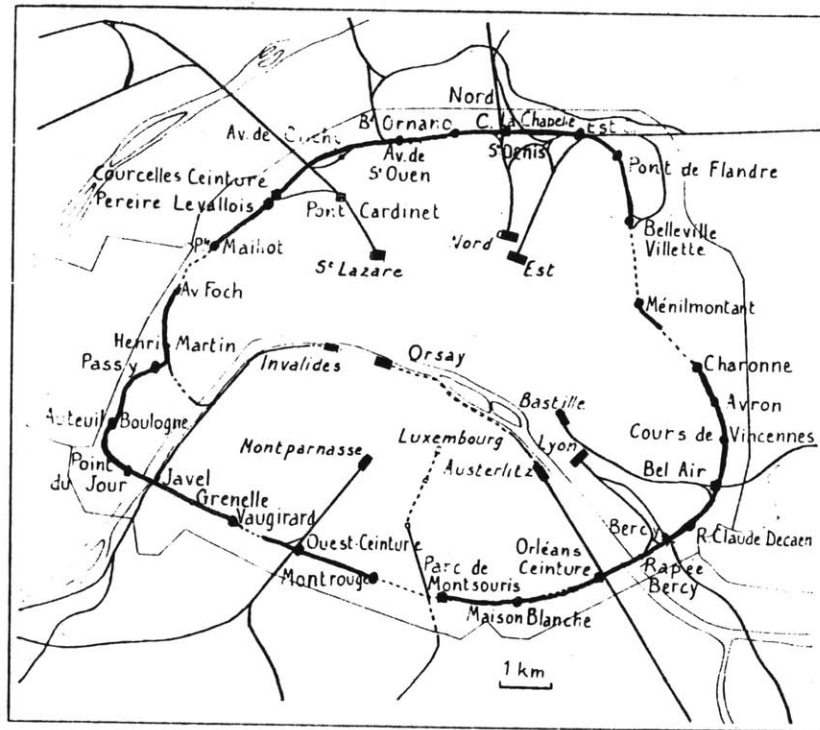
5

Bateaux Mouche in 1900



6

*Trains stations and
Petite Ceinture
(petit train)*



and pedestrian cross axis along the Seine, which connects the East and West sides of Paris. Gradually, the various Expositions led to the layout and development of what are now the main vistas of the city: the site of the Expo 1978 stretched from the Champs de Mars, over the river to the hill of Chaillot. It is on this axis that the Eiffel Tower was to be erected, now the symbol of Paris. The construction of the Grand and Petit Palais, and the Pont Alexandre III contributed to the layout of another great vista, facing the Invalides (Expo 1900). The increase in traffic and population during Exposition time called for better means of transportation. Access to the Exposition and to the city in general was already facilitated by the subtle implementation of important train stations surrounding the center of Paris. In 1900, transportation was to be improved once again by the inauguration of the first subwayline following an East-West axis, on the right bank. This innovation was promoted along with the "small train", a railroad loop system surrounding Paris and connecting the train stations to each other. The small train has now fallen into disuse but will be restored for the next Expo 1989. The Bateaux Mouches, introduced in 1867, have continuously been in use since. The combination of these systems allowed the arrival and the motion of the thousands of visitors to the Expo 1900. Such a huge implementation made at the scale of the Expo (but almost too big once the Expo was gone) created the basis which, later on, enabled the city to grow and expand.

Thus, through preparing the city to absorb momentarily a tremendous number of people, the Expositions prepared Paris to adapt herself gradually to the increasing population growth to come. The exceptionality and ephemerality of such a great event forced the city to face a specific situation and therefore to implement appropriate infrastructures at such a scale that they necessarily remained.

Transience
Of
Structures

However, the buildings of the Expositions rarely survived the closing of the festivals. The permanence of the urban built environment exposes the city to an acute situation: once the fair is gone, the life of the city inevitably recovers its normal pace and takes over its every day space again.

Whereas the remote Expositions may often leave ruins behind them, the city cannot afford an undesirable congestion paralyzing its vital functions; the expository buildings have to be removed;

Whereas the remote Expositions may restore their buildings for the next fair (what then can be the expectations of the visitors when they come again and rediscover the same site?), the Expositions within the city have to renew their decor each time, as in a theatre play. Therefore, Expositions may fulfill better their role of representing new images of our evolutionary civilization, each time differing from the former.

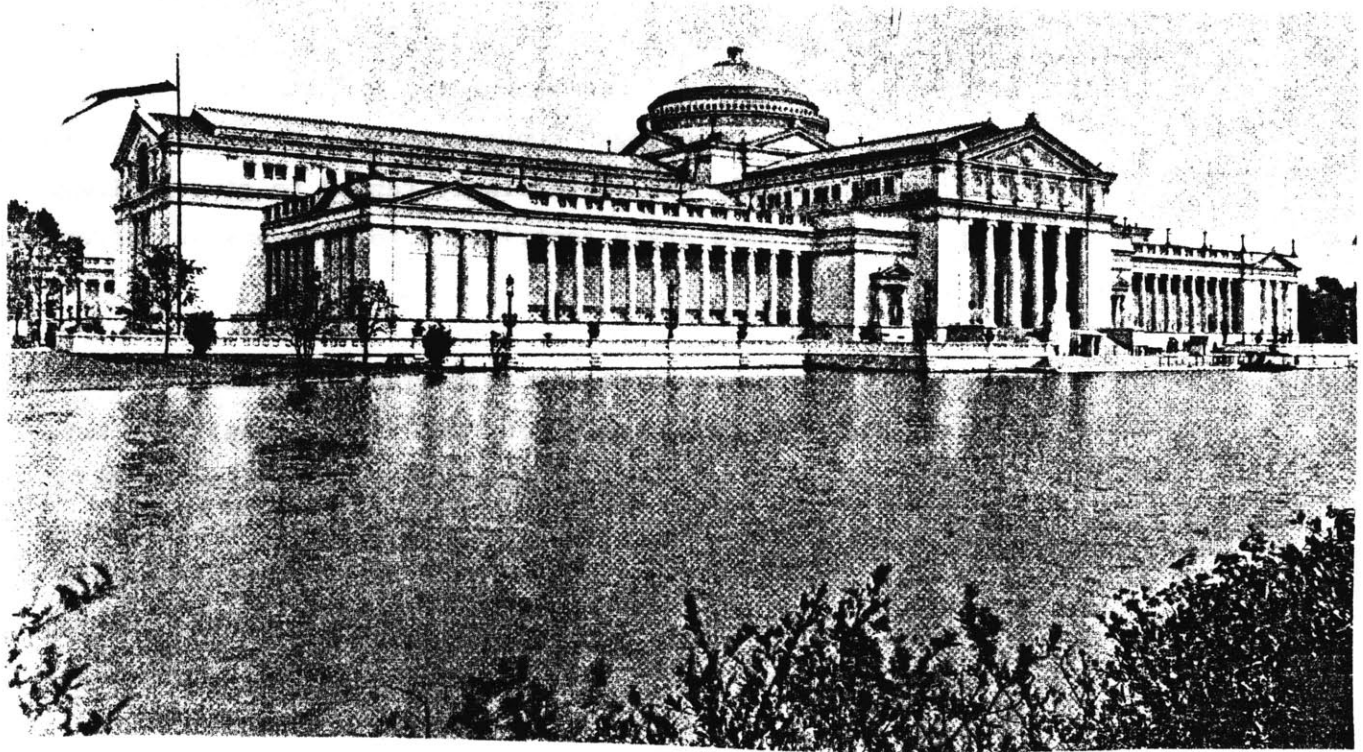
A R C H I T E C T U R E O F F E S T I V A L

We already saw to what extent the configuration of the sites evolved over time. From the self-contained building of the Expo 1855, the aspect of the Expositions turned into a pavilionary universe by the end of the 19th century. This evolution went along simultaneously with radical changes in terms of displays' techniques, building systems and styles. Designed to be temporary, the expository architecture was therefore allowed to break away from the academic rules and aesthetic norms of its time; it could express the exceptionality and ostentation inherent in the festival's phenomenon. "Architecture of Expositions and true architecture are two distinctly different things" (Bouge, 1876). Nevertheless, the architecture of pavilions curiously and increasingly tended to give an image of durable construction; the Beaux Arts style contributed to the apparent perennality of the Exposition building.

Appearance
Of
Permanence

The history of iron construction was closely related to the advent of Universal Expositions. The buildings of the two first Expositions were in themselves technological displays giving, among other displays, the image of advancement in building systems. They were planned for rapid erection and dismantelling for iron parts could be prefabricated. Therefore, it was a logical process that these Expo buildings would disappear after the closing day. Yet, following the boldness of this architectural style, which dared to show structures made of glass and iron only, the subsequent Expositions promptly clothed their nudity under ornate plasters and sculptural motifs. The Palais de l'Industrie in 1867 already showed a sort of regression compared to 1855 and the Crystal Palace: the elliptic metallic

7. The Palace of Fine Arts, Chicago 1893



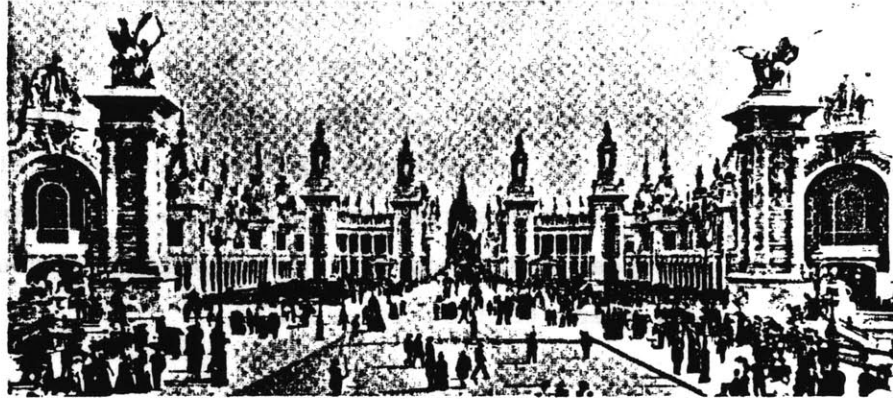
construction was encased in a monumental stonework at the ground level, enhanced by an immense triumphal arch as an entrance.

Tradition and academism were gradually taking over innovation ⁴. It seems that that architecture of Expositions could not cope with its being ephemeral. Architects were convinced that these architectural pieces, although temporary, were reflecting and witnessing the trend of their time. Expositionary temporary architecture takes time to be prepared. It was subject to competitions, detailed studies, and to careful description. Unconsciously, this type of architecture was meant to last forever.

The Columbian Exposition in 1893, which was rather an architectural show than an industrial fair, displayed, more than any other Exposition, a look of "lasting forever." Made to assert the importance and the vigor of a new era, the Exposition showed a successful effort to impose architectural consistency, and appeared like a dream in sharp contrast with the industrial city that produced it. "As the pace of technological change intensified, so the need for security through historial associationalism in architecture became more insistent" (L. Roth, 1980). The White City, although suffused by the Beaux Arts tradition, was inspired by a strong classicism tinged of Roman Empire styling, symbolic of solidity and power. However, "the vast covered inclosures" were "faced with a decorative mask as the Romans clothed their rough structures with magnificent architectural veneers of marbles, bronze and sculpture..." The buildings did not "express actual structure but rather served as architectural screens" (Van Brunt, 1891). Sullivan denounced this exaltation of the fictitious and the fake, and foresaw that there would be no hope for this hackneyed styling to be a new revival or a new school.

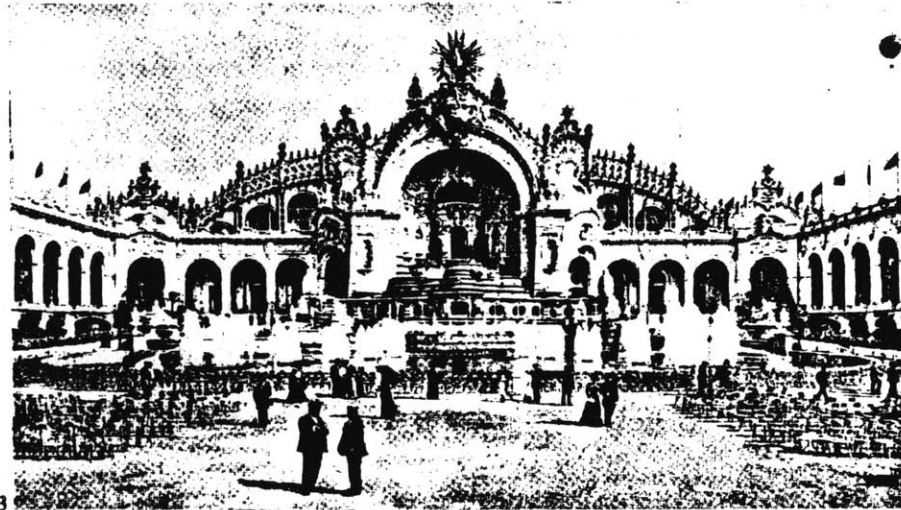
8.

Esplannade des Invalides
1900.



The Palace of Electricity
on Champs de Mars
1900

9.

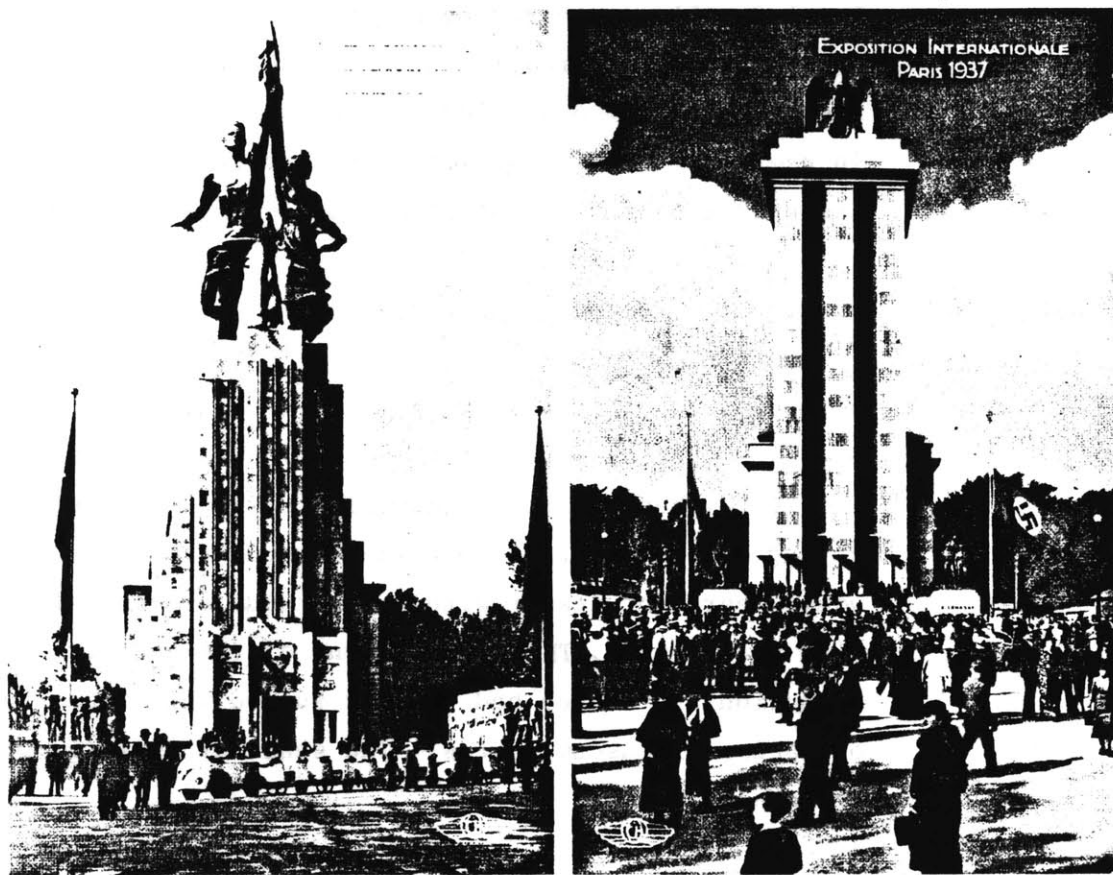


3

"In a new world, they dare no innovations" (Vierendeel, 1892). Indeed, this architecture was a permanent-like dream of staff which did not survive the flames of the arsonists.

The semblance of "real" given by the Expositions' pavilions intensified, simultaneously with the flourishing of the Beaux Art eclecticism, which reached its apogee during the Expo 1900. The architectural fantasia of that period gave the impression that it was constructed from permanent building materials. The British Royal Pavillion created by Lutyens for the Expo 1900 was completely removable, having been made from interlocking sheets of steel which were covered by a roughened cement (Allwood, 1980). But such sophisticated systems have not always been in use. The varying architectural styles, affecting the surface only, were largely executed with a lightweight mixture of plaster, cement and jute fibers, projected on a metallic frame. This variety of styles was most visible with the foreign pavilions. Because there were occasional and ephemeral, they had to feature in the most striking way the best characteristics of their country. Their facades were used to offer real visual shows to attract the visitors not only to their pavilion but also to their country. Most of the time, they were ostentatious and overemphasized architectural pastiches of their traditional style (sometimes bordering caricature). France would reconstitute an old quarter of Paris; Italy would represent itself with a sumptuous stucco palazzo; Belgium with a Renaissance city hall, etc... Thus, by the end of the century, innovation in matters of construction and images had totally turned into fake traditions, into a collection of ephemeral museum pieces. The sense of prestige no longer relied on a sense of novelty.

10. *The USSR Pavilion and the III Reich Pavilion facing each other on the Champs de Mars, 1937.*



It is only in the 20th century that a change occurred in the self-display of each nation. The Pavilion style became an architectural demonstration of the political image of the nations and their level of advancement. The special Exposition of 1925 (Arts Decoratifs) had shown avant-garde products. The "Pavillion des Temps Nouveaux" (Le Corbusier) along with the Pavilion of Mel'nikov (USSR) were among those characterized by their light and removable structure, made of wood, fabric or glass.

But they were ephemeral successes of an actual temporary architecture, since the Expo 1937 was to go back to a colossal neo-classic style, to the detriment of the Bauhaus and Cubism of the 20's. Though far from the fantasia and the exuberance of the 19th century, the structures of 1937 still represented a sort of epic didacticism, designed once again to impress. Italy, the III Reich and the USSR Pavilions were characterized by a strong sense of verticality and monumentality, contrasting drastically with their displays of the previous century. They were reflecting their growing ambitions and dynamism, and were looking even more permanent than ever. They were meant to evoke images of solidity, power and progress.

Despite (or maybe because of) this appearance of perennality, precariousness and fantasia were conveying the capacity of the architectures of fêtes to create powerful images. Meant to generate a special ambiance, they had no reason to survive the end of the festival.

Preservation
Or
Elimination

However, a few buildings have remained. No one has ever been certain of the motivations that led the city to decide whether a Palace or a Pavilion should be built forever or for the festival's days only. Rare were the buildings which were a priori designed to remain. Their permanence or destruction seemed to depend on the success

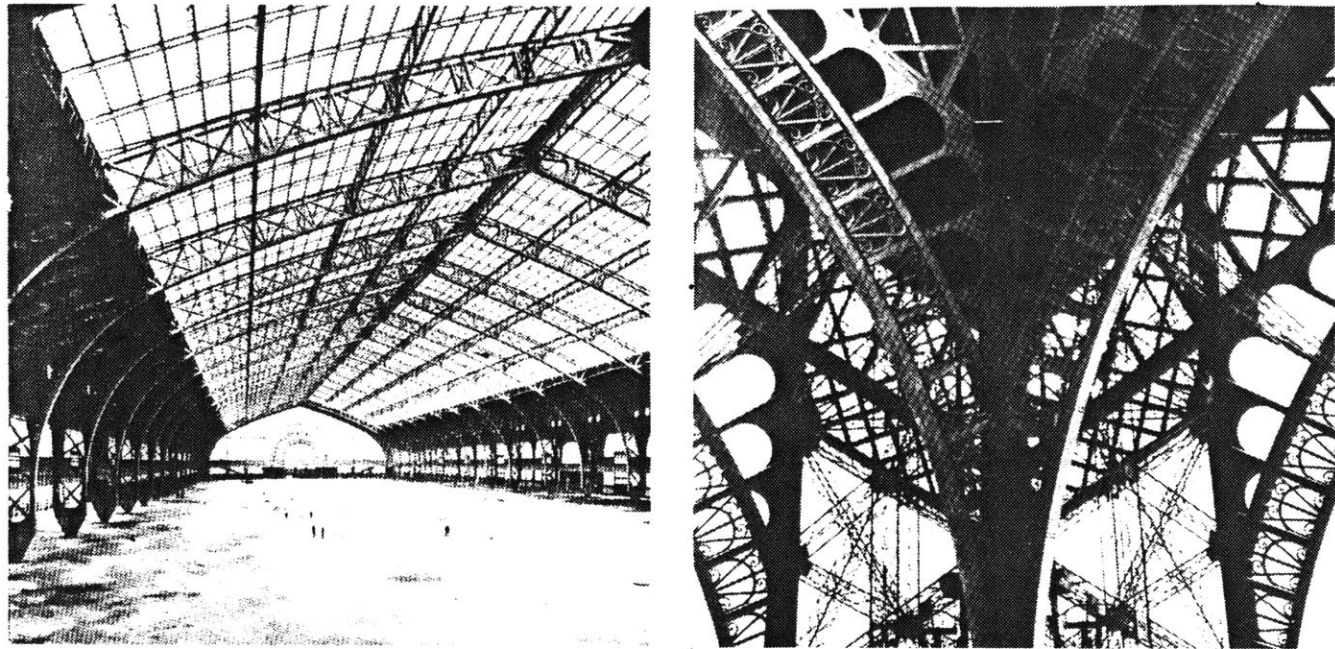
they had during the Exposition; it depended also on their capacity to be reutilized.

In the light of what has actually remained until today, it seems that an inverted relationship (ratio) exists between the level of innovation contained in a building and the span of time it was assigned to last. This dilemma between temporary and permanent is illustrated by the case of the Eiffel Tower. Based on a prefabricated system, the tower was to be dismantled after the Exposition, like any other attraction, as if it were a courageous gesture that would have no value once the achievement was fulfilled. Discredited by the "fin de siècle" intellectuals who could not stand the sight of this insolent metallic uselessness, stuck in the center of Paris Beautiful, the tower was nevertheless preserved. "It is only once atop of it that it disappears from the panorama of Paris"(R.Barthes). It is also because the tower offers the most fantastic view of Paris that it became so popular: it was (and still is) an outstanding source of profit for the city.

The social pressure which saved the tower had reasons independent from the trait of innovation involved in the building. Besides the Eiffel Tower, the "engineering architecture" of Expositions buildings did not succeed in imposing itself, although it was announcing the functionalist construction which triumphed decades later: iron and glass, standardized elements and light which reached their apogee in the "curtain-wall" style. It seems that misfortune obstinately persisted for the first "chef d'oeuvres" of the iron era.

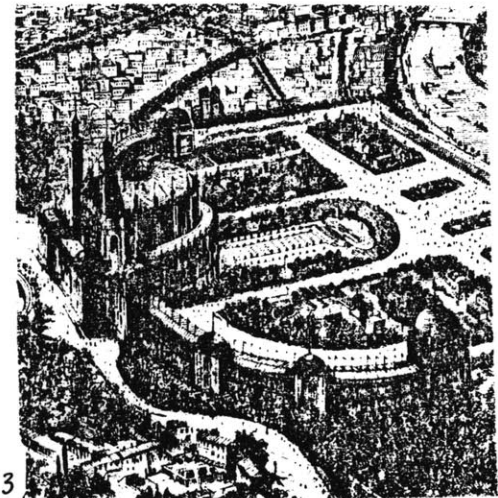
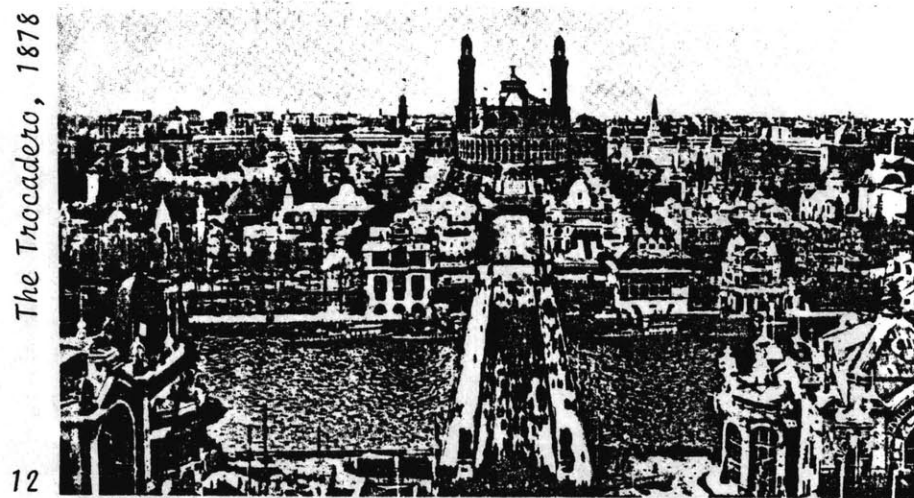
The first Palais de l'Industrie was demolished 45 years after its erection in favor of the most heavily eclectic buildings. No one contested the disappearance of the astonishing iron and glass ring which housed the Expo 1867 and no one suggested its

removal elsewhere, like the Crystal Palace (which finally burned in 1936). The Galerie des Machines of 1889 had the chance to be reused for the Expo 1900, but was thereafter also demolished (1910). Many other polyvalent metallic halls have been torn down over time, including the "Halles" recently dismantled (a single building only was saved and turned into a cultural center). However, there were attempts to preserve some of the Pavillions or Palaces. They proceeded from motivations as obscure as those which decided their elimination.



11. *The two iron 'chefs d'oeuvres' of the Expo 1889: the Galerie des Machines and the Eiffel Tower.*

The Trocadero, 1878



Polemics

The Palais de l'Industrie, built for the temporary purposes of the Exposition 1855, remained almost useless after the closing day until 1900. Left untouched for financial reasons, and surrounded with rows of shrubbery, it became the meeting place for shabby individuals and suspect 'rendez-vous'. Besides, it was hated by the Republicans as an oversized reminder of the Second Empire, and for its "ugliness" and decrepitude. But the Palace suddenly found supporters when its demolition was decided.

The Palais du Trocadero, erected in 1878, went through similar public polemics in 1936 when the "odious stucco wedding-cake", obstructing the vista of the Champs de Mars, was ordered to be torn down. The building was in a state of advanced decomposition and it was established that restoration would cost more than its demolition. Petitions of supporters, in 1936, astonished the Parisian population: they were claiming that the absence of the building would deface the Parisian landscape and that its familiar image was now part of the city.



14.

*The metallic structure
of the
Grand Palais
Paris, 1900*



The Palais de l'Industrie and the Palais du Trocadero were both demolished, in order to be immediately replaced by the rare expository buildings that still remain in the city of Paris: the Petit Palais and the Grand Palais, the Palais de Chaillot.

The Grand and the Petit Palais, facing each other, offer a double example, along with the Pont Alexandre III, of the aesthetic trend of the "fin de siècle." This pompous trilogy constitutes the second major vista created by a Universal Exposition. The two Palaces, sited symmetrically about the vista's axis, were meant to last beyond the Expo 1900 and, as the two pillars of a huge gate, to mark the end of a century (exit?) and the beginning of a new one (entrance?). They are a still permanent example of the dichotomy which opposed (or reunited) architects and engineers at that time. Both buildings took advantage (hypocritically?) of the new building technologies and yet did not dare express them in the facades, which are outwardly in the academic style (e.g. eclectic). These new techniques of construction allowed architecture to inflate to enormous proportions, adding to the already heaviness of the Beaux Arts style. Replacing for posterity the unfortunate Palais de l'Industrie of 1855, they stand as presumptuous witnesses now belonging to the French patrimony.

It was the Palais de Chaillot which took the place, in 1937, of the Palais de Trocadero, after agitated polemics. In the scope of the Universal Exposition of 1937, the Palais du Trocadero could not be kept as such; its neorococo styling would deface the physiognomy of the coming Exposition. Then a first competition was launched by the committee of the Exposition in 1934. The entries were to provide an ingenious solution for a provisory decor designed to hide the Palais, in harmony with the spirit of the Expo 1937. But it appeared that camouflage solutions were too onerous and would not eventually solve the problem of the old Trocadero. A second competition in

1935 was based on a new program: the worn out Palais had to be demolished, except for the foundations; the new building should create a sober and harmonious architectural ensemble. That explains the similarity of the plans and site integration between the former and the actual edifice. Moreover, the building was not to serve the purpose of the Expo only; it was also to stand as a new monument for the city of Paris. Indeed, the decision of building for the good was part of the politics of the Front Populaire. In the 1930's, France was diseased with unemployment. The Expo and particularly the construction of the Palais de Chaillot, the focus point of the festival, would create jobs for thousands of workers (±20,000) of all sorts. The ministers of Labor and Education confirmed: "The Palais de Chaillot will bring to the Nation social and employment benefits; its construction will have a direct and psychological effect on the people."

Architecture is a domain where the opposition between "ephemeral" and "perennial" affects people's imagination⁵. The persistence of a project and its "solidity" demonstrates the efforts to strive against unemployment, functions that provisory architecture would not carry out. Thus, the choice of permanence, of durable construction materials and the classical aspect of the building take on a role of display. "Men need great architectures which can symbolize their beliefs, which are the signs of their hopes." (Does this thought of Chombard de Lave in 'Des Hommes et des Villes,' 1963, also mean that when economics weaken, culture grows?) This perennial architecture, which offered monumental stoneworks to a diseased people⁶, was to cure the employment problems only temporarily. The construction of the museums and theaters of the Palais de Chaillot called for workers from all regions. They were left unemployed once the festival was gone. Yet, the Palais still remains nowadays, as the symbol of men's efforts before the Second World War.

 CONCLUSION

Demolition of the 'Palais de l'Industrie 1855' in 1898.

15



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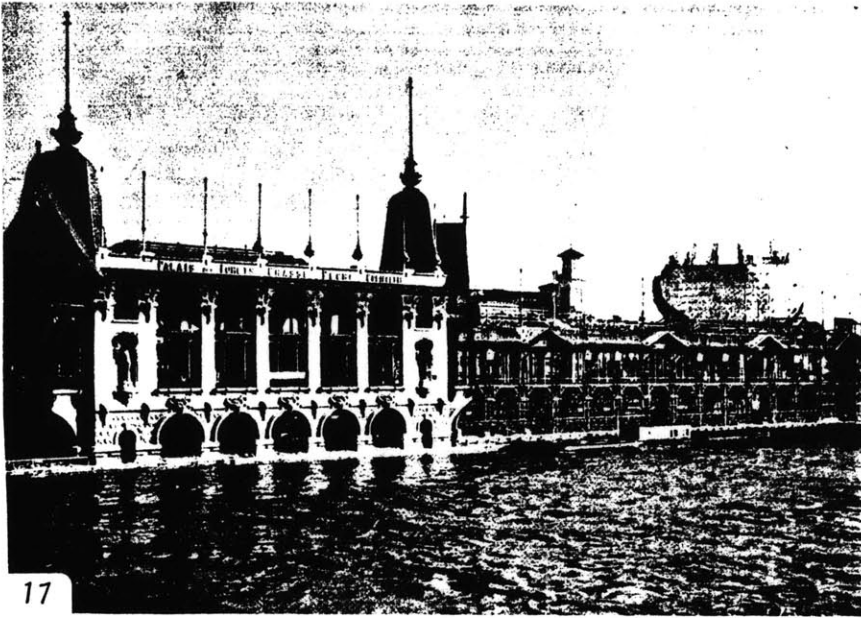
The green houses of the Expo 1867 were torn down by a hurricane right after the closing day (Dec. 1867) Paris.

The fate of the Expositions' buildings leaves one thoughtful; why erecting so high and so fast, why ornating so richly and innovating so boldly when the outcomes of such energies are to astonish the World for six months only?

Whether dedicated to assume a function of museum, or doomed to dismantelling, the edifices of an Exposition do not vanish right after the closing day. After witnessing the drastic transformations that occur during the preparation period and the magic of the results, the City is given to attend the spectacle of the slow agony of the Exposition.

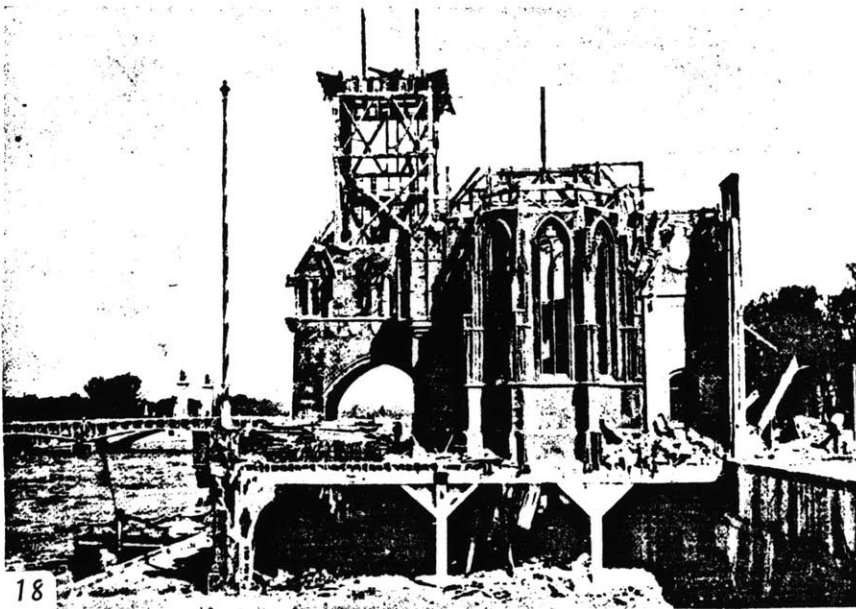
As soon as the doors close, time and weather work both together their alteration on the structures, added upon inevitable depredations. And then come the dislocation and dismantelling.

Besides the remaining infrastructures and the Palaces turned into museums, the Exposition some-



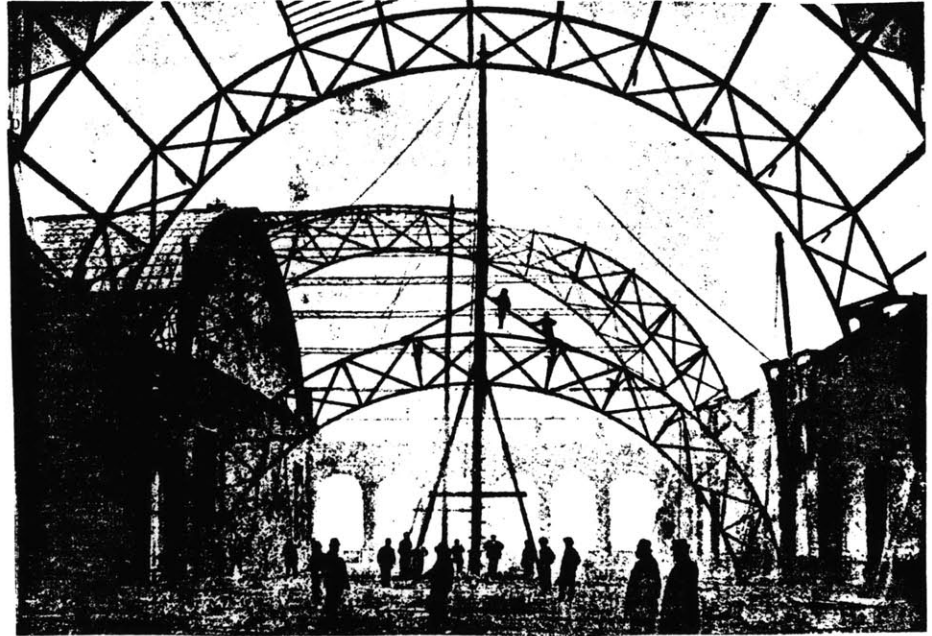
-times reincarnate under the shape of new buildings made of recuperated materials left on the sites. In Paris are many examples of 'Cites d'artistes' or 'Ateliers' which were constructed from the iron elements of Expositions' pavilions. In fact, there are regulations which stipulate rights of preemption which allow the host city to buy any remaining structures; also, the industrialists who exhibited their products in their own pavilions have often reutilized them to built new factory buildings. Some of the foreign pavilions were removed and rebuilt in their own country, also turned in public edifices as usual (City Hall, Library, Museum...).

But often also, one can still contemplate desolated ruins, pathetic souvenirs of glittering festivals, waiting for the next Exposition to make them alive again...



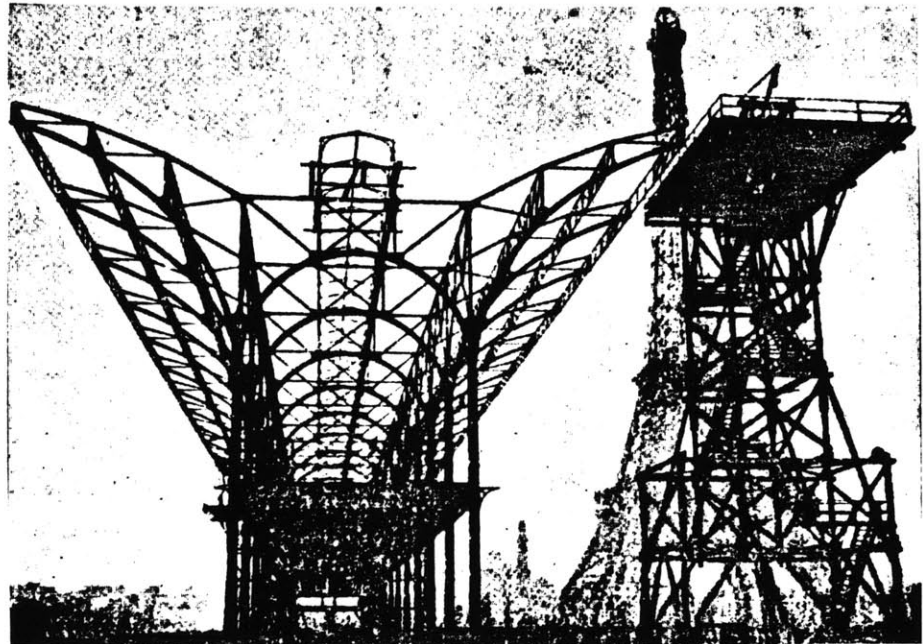
17. Demolition of the 'Pavilion of Forests', Paris 1901.
 18. Demolition of the 'Rue des Nations', Paris 1901.

*Demolition of the
Palais de l'Indus-
trie in 1897, Paris.*



19

*Iron skeleton of
the Palais du Genie
Civil in 1898, Paris.*



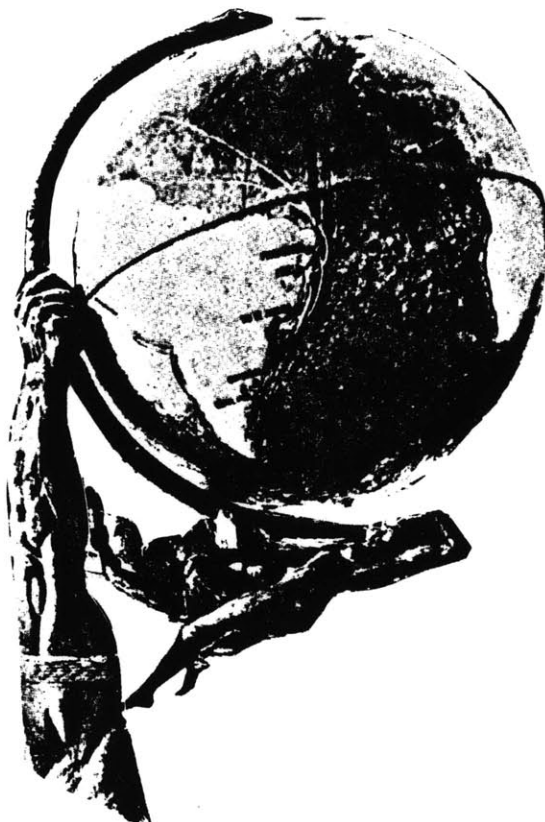
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REFLECTIONS ON THE EXPOSITION OF 1989 4

"The Paths of Freedom...Project for the Third Millenium".

"... A bold message of hope..."

(President Mitterand, 1982)



After 50 years since the last Exposition, the Expo planned for the year 1989 will appear as an unexpected revival which seems to be imprinted with even more ambition and significance than ever. To conclude this paper, it is now interesting to examine to what extent the coming festival is still part of the phenomenon discussed in the three preceding THEMES.

P R E F I G U R A T I O N O F T H E E X P O S I T I O N 1 9 8 9 / P A R I S

Paris will hold a Universal Exhibition in 1989. The agreement was made on Dec. 8, 1982 by the Bureau International des Expositions: Paris is authorized to celebrate "universally" the Bicentennial of the French Revolution.

"Les chemins de la Liberte...Projet pour le 3eme millenaire" is a title which remains true to the trend of the Modern Expositions. The Expositions of the 19th century were manifestations of great ideals side by side with technological competition. Then, the Expo 1937 was a confrontation of ideologies, and Bruxelles 1958 turned out to be a huge commercial operation. Montreal '67 marked a turn in the history of the Great Expositions and was the first to enter upon men's problems. Osaka '70 was supposed to illustrate similar themes; but it was described as being a luxurious showcase of the developed countries.

A
Political
Act

As each Exposition, the intention of the Expo 1989 is to produce a better show than the last one. The world-wide scope of the Exposition stands as "a message of hope and understanding among men" (Mitterand). Moreover, "this Exposition will be a political act in the face of the World" (Bordaz, organizer of the Prefiguration of the Expo 1989)¹. The discourse of the Exposition conveys a sense of pure intentions and the selected themes illustrate the grandeur and humanitarianism of the enterprise:

The Solidarity among Men (Equity and Aid to the Third World).

The Rights of Men (Justice and fundamental Liberties)

The Ecosphere and the issues of natural resources, agronomy and interactions between Man and Nature.

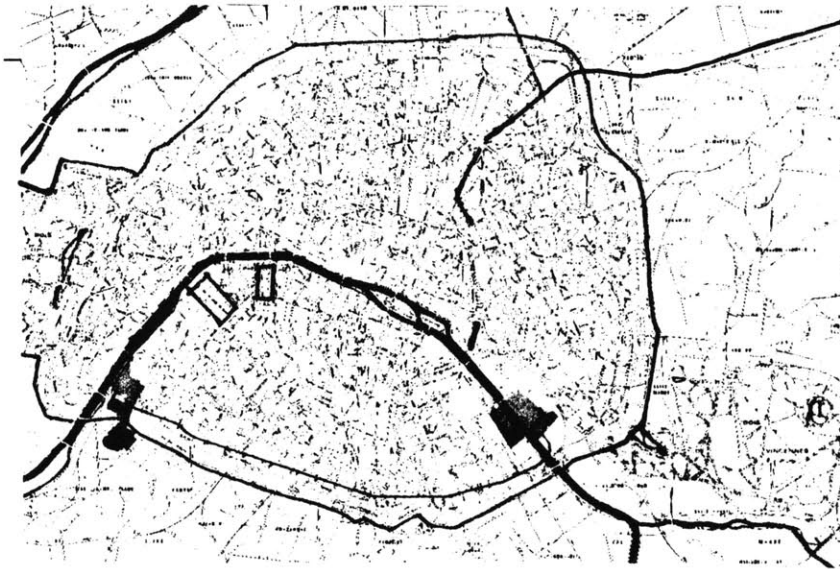
The Science and its potentials in the service of Man (Biology and Energy)

"For these purposes, it is necessary that men from all over the world meet and think all together about the great problems of our modern World, in order to look at possible mutual actions (R. Bordaz).

Indeed, the Expo 1989 is the first to be set up not merely for political reasons, but of which politics are the intrinsic essence of it. In being the initiator of such an ambitious enterprise, France intends to show the world the importance of her political status and diplomatic role on the international scene. In the light of the events that altered the credibility of the French nation in the face of the foreign nation (when the socialists came to power), the Expo 1989 stands no doubt as a means to restore faith. France is willing to demonstrate her capacity, in spite of the crisis, to be concerned with the great human problems and still afford a great festival. As the previous Expositions, French pride and identity are at stake. Yet, the political motivations are now obvious and openly expressed; has the mask fallen?

A
Festival

Framework for public relations and expression of a political status, a Universal Exposition implies the choice of a date that is significant and meaningful: 1989, in coinciding with the anniversary of the French Revolution, was a supporting element regarding the public opinion and the application submitted to the BIE. Such a national and popular event must be marked by special festivities.



1

(The listing is subject to change. These information were released by the 'Figaro Magazine', March 1983, Paris.)

SOUTH WEST SITE

Left Bank:

The 'Pavillion d'Honneur'.

The 'Pavillion de la France'.

The foreign Pavilions and International Organizations.

These Pavilions will be sited in the 'Garden of Solidarity'.

The Palace of Sports will be slightly eccentric, located beyond the 'peripherique' highway which surrounds Paris.

All the structures above will be implanted on a huge slab, passing over the highway (400x200m).

SOUTH EAST SITE

Right Bank:

Pavilions of Industry

Amusement Park

Left Bank:

Thematic Pavilions. They will constitute the core of the Festival, the essence of the Exposition 89.

Pavilion of Lights (?)

Pavilion of Liberty / 1789

Pavilion of the Republic / 1793

Pavilion of History of the Proletariat...

Most of the building of the left bank will remain after the festival is over and will be turned into museums (Museum of the Revolution, as an example).

The two banks will be linked by a megastructural bridge, which will combine traffic and commerce.

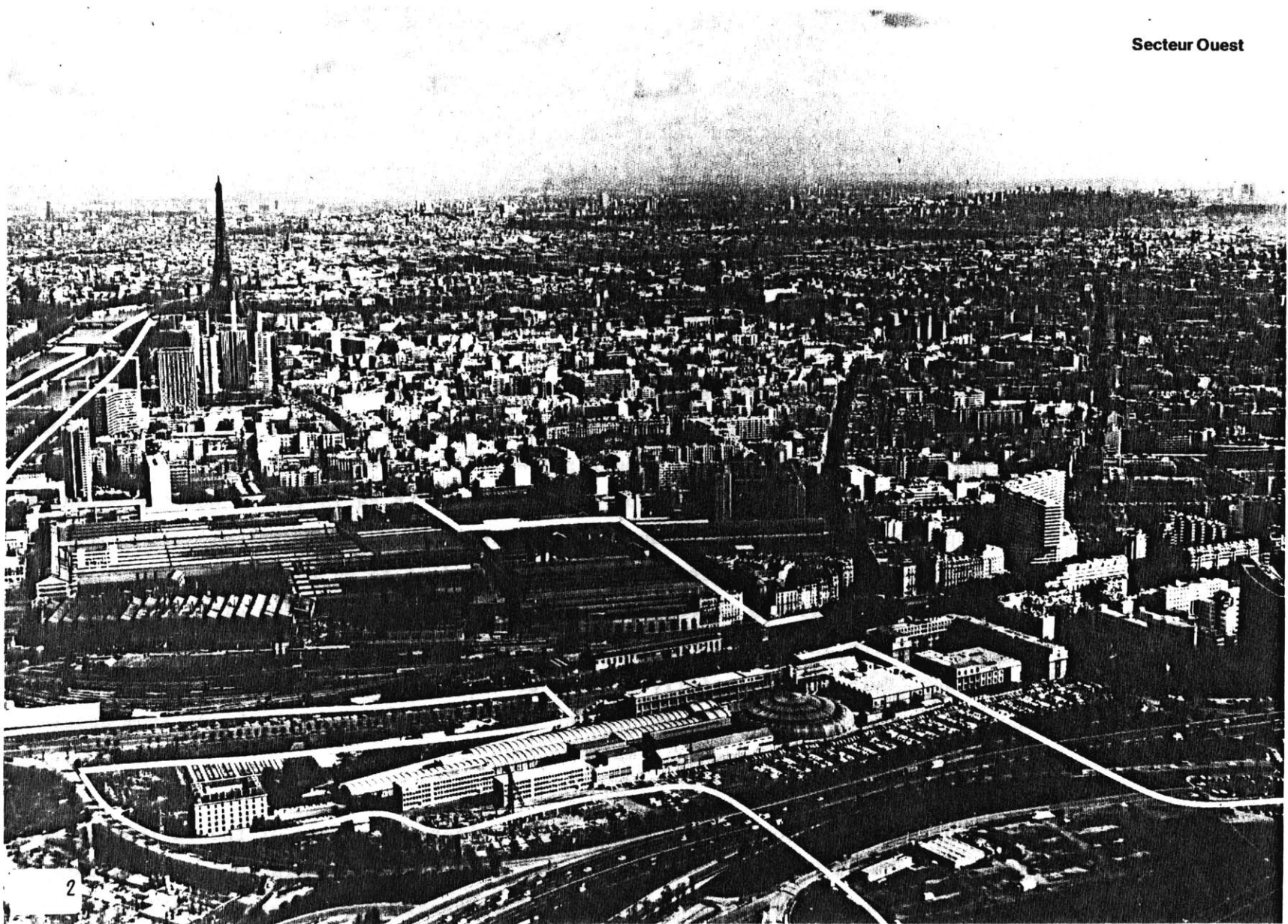
Therefore, it is a logical process that the Exposition 1989 is conceived as a festival; a festival of ideas, of political consciousness; a festival for the people.

Like Jean Jacques Rousseau and Diderot, like the Third Republic and the Front Populaire, the Socialists of the end of the 20th century want to resume with the lost tradition of festivals. The Expo 1989 will be an oversized and amplified July 14, a real "fête populaire." But the main objective is that the festival should serve the city. Whereas the principles of the Expo belong to the realm of idealism, its physical implementation enters upon that of realism.²

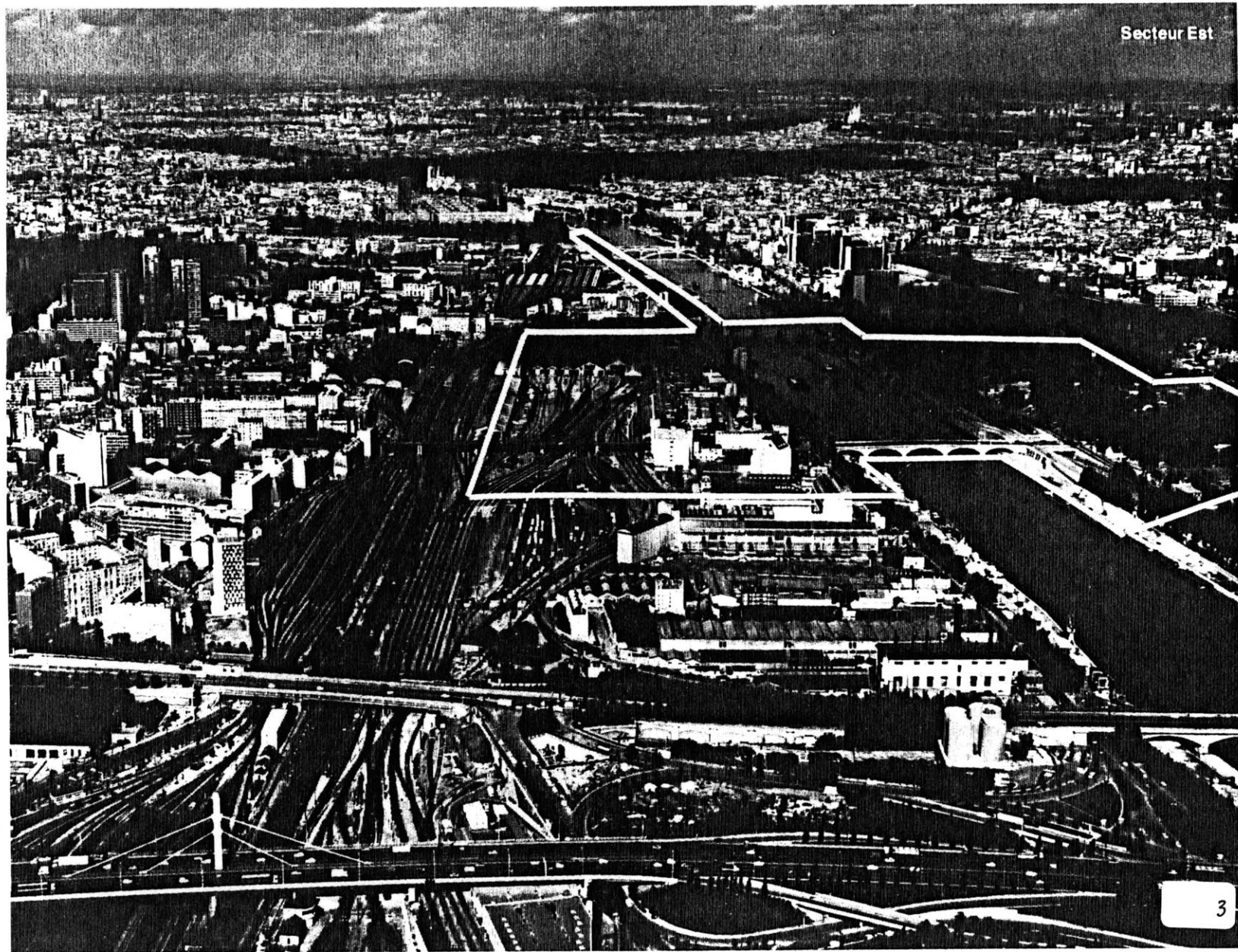
An
Urban
Project

Indeed, the physical configuration of the Exposition, according to the wish of the organizers,³ must participate into urban rearrangements planned for the coming years. The physical implementation of the festival will represent a mid-ground solution between the usual concentration of all activities in Paris itself and the decentralist approach inspired from Giraudoux' reflections. The Expositions' sites will be sited as to decongest the center of the city and as to be the nuclei for further urban developments. As exposed in Theme Two, there will be two sites both located along the Seine in opposite directions. The two areas, located at the limits of Paris were formerly essentially devoted to industrial activities. The structures have fallen into disuse and now prevent the residential neighborhoods from developing normally.

This innovative dichotomy goes along with a clear separation of the various activities. The West Side will be devoted to the international displays and the foreign pavilions, which will disappear after the festival. The thematic and "ideological"



2



section of the Exposition will be organized on the East side. This area will eventually benefit from the Exposition's structures designed to remain and to house cultural activities. Besides the fact that these two sites represent the only available large spaces in Paris, this new type of Exposition planning undoubtedly reflects the political nature of the Government in terms of urban policies:

1. Decentralization
2. Revitalization and "socialization" of the East side of Paris, known as the working class area. Always disfavored compared to the center of Paris, it is a logical process that a Socialist government pays special attention to its cultural and urban development.⁴

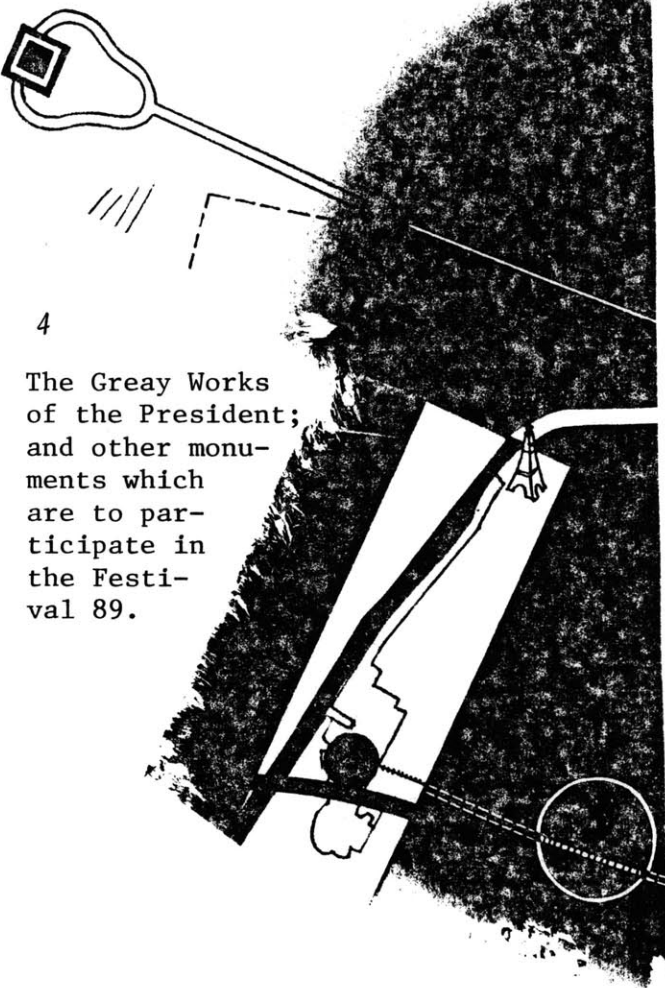
Besides, the conceptualization of the Universal Exposition takes place in the framework of a more urbanistic, global enterprise, already known as the "Great Works of the President."⁵ These projects, undertaken side by side with the preparation of the Exposition, should be inaugurated at the same time. Their objectives are three fold:

Before the festival: source of employment

During the festival: each punctual project should participate into the general animation of the city as elements of the Exposition (displays)

After the festival: these projects, in belonging to a general scheme, should contribute to the physical reorganization of the city and to its improvement in terms of urban planning and cultural monuments.⁶

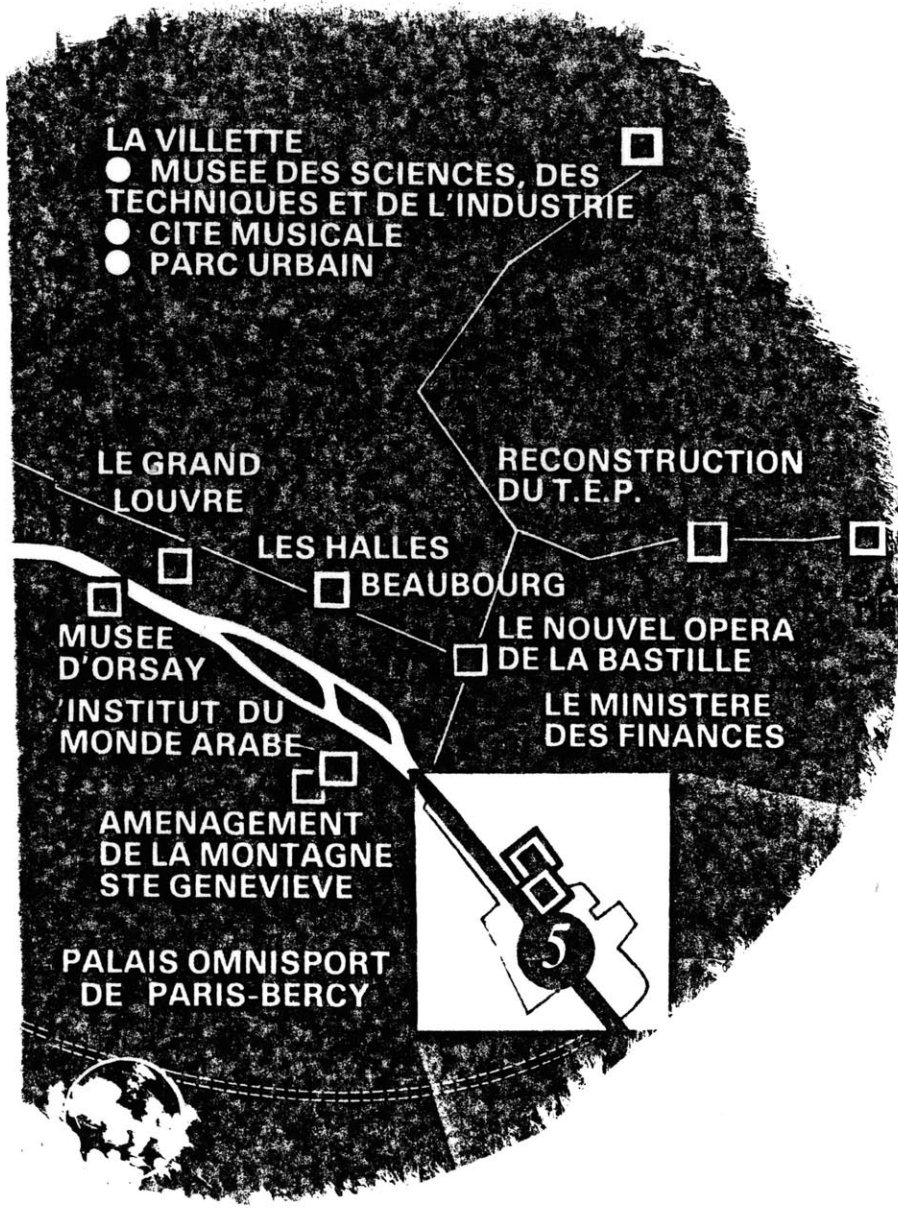
TETE DEFENSE
 ● MINISTERES DE L'URBANISME
 ET DU LOGEMENT ET DE
 L'ENVIRONNEMENT
 ● CENTRE INTERNATIONAL
 DE LA COMMUNICATION



4

The Gray Works
 of the President;
 and other monu-
 ments which
 are to par-
 ticipate in
 the Festi-
 val 89.

LA VILLETTE
 ● MUSEE DES SCIENCES, DES
 TECHNIQUES ET DE L'INDUSTRIE
 ● CITE MUSICALE
 ● PARC URBAIN



LE GRAND LOUVRE

RECONSTRUCTION DU T.E.P.

LES HALLES

BEAUBOURG

ALLEE ROCK

MUSEE D'ORSAY

LE NOUVEL OPERA DE LA BASTILLE

INSTITUT DU MONDE ARABE

LE MINISTERE DES FINANCES

AMENAGEMENT DE LA MONTAGNE STE GENEVIEVE

PALAIS OMNISPORT DE PARIS-BERCY



T O C O N C L U D E

The Universal Exposition of 1989 is a matter of conciliating an image of socialism, the prospect of a better future and the ceremonies for the Bicentennial of the French Revolution. The ultimate goals are even more ambitious since they deal at the same time with public relations issues, the restoration of faith in the host nation and the physical and cultural reorganization of Paris. Thus, the significance of the festival is not all contained in symbolism, the festival should have a constructive value. It is a matter of not only setting up an ephemeral event but also of constructing the future. The years of preparation which precede the festival count as much as the event itself. It is during this period that the optimum energies are required, and that the hopefully successful outcomes are predetermined.

Looking back at the issues discussed in the three preceding THEMES -that of the role, the implementation and the durable impacts of Expositions- the same queries remain today.

The
Role

Is the ability of an Exposition to adapt itself to a new context each time enough to sustain the validity of the phenomenon nowadays? During the last fifty years, the world has witnessed unprecedented progress. Particularly, communication is now almost instantaneous. Therefore, have not Expositions become obsolete in enhancing communication and in promoting peace among people?

Even though a Universal Exposition gives the impression that, technically, the world is moving towards unity, it does not give much hope for social harmony; there are no machines on exhibition which will protect us against wars, outbreak of racial conflicts, labor crises or revolutions. Now that Nations meet and agree on mutual actions through high level conferences and diplomacy, and public relations among people are made through the efforts of specialized international organizations, how can an informal gathering of individuals in the framework of a Universal Exposition influence international decision making processes?

Implementation

Nevertheless, astonishing is the sense of coordination and achievement among the aims of the Expo 1989. While each of them could have been dealt with in separate ways, and maybe through more appropriate means, the Government decided that they should all coincide within a single festival (particularly, the urban projects should be ready on the festival's opening day). Deadlines and ambitious goals that society may think beyond its strength to fulfill gives it an incentive to transcend its usual abilities. Expositions have often proven that they could be catalysts for a full output of energy and that they were able to accelerate procedures and processes of completion.

Enduring Traces

This coincidence of intentions and objectives designed to induct a better future is to be consecrated with a magnificent Exposition. The paradox which arises from the ambivalence between the ephemeral nature of the event, and the imprint on the city and the collective memory it seeks to implement may yet bear fruitful results.

Change
Within
Continuity

The upcoming Exposition could be seen as a step forward into the history of Universal Expositions. It demonstrates its ability to adapt itself to the context of today's society. We mentioned already its greater emphasis on humanist matters, its clarity in terms of political discourse, and its innovative approach in terms of layout and impacts on the city. However, these signs of necessary evolution correspond to the irresistible alteration of society, due to progress.

In the light of the prior THEMES which reveal some of the traits of the phenomenon of Expositions, the sense of ambiguity that emanated from all former Expositions has persisted throughout and will continue to persist. Are these festivals really necessary to implement ambitious goals such as described above? Or are they pretenses designed to rationally sustain the sort of folly that gives birth to Universal Expositions? The two queries are closely inter-related; this ambivalence is intrinsic to the motivations that lead to the decision of holding a Universal Exposition and remains as the common attribute to all of them. To that extent, the coming Exposition belongs to a long line of tradition. From 1855 to 1989, 17 Universal Expositions will have occurred; each of them was a distorting mirror of the society of its time, and distinctly reflected its own perception of the future. It is expected that the continuing Expositions (if any) of the 21st century will evolve in the same spirit. Despite change in concepts inherent in each of them, they will still feature a similar demonstration of idealism, they will still be glittering expressions of man's need for self exhibition and for exceptional festive events. They will all belong to the same phenomenon and each Exposition within the phenomenon will always convey a sense of change within a sense of continuity.

NOTES

UNIVERSAL EXPOSITIONS CHECK LIST (J. Allwood 1977)

LONDON	1851	Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of all Nations	6,039,195 [~]
PARIS	1855	Exposition Universelle	5,162,330
LONDON	1862	International Exhibition of 1862	6,211,103
PARIS	1867	Exposition Universelle	6,805,809
VIENNA	1873	Weltausstellung 1873 Wien	7,254,637
PHILADELPHIA	1876	Centennial Exposition	9,910,966
PARIS	1878	Exposition Universelle	16,032,725
PARIS	1889	Exposition Universelle	32,350,297
CHICAGO	1893	World' Columbian Exposition	27,529,400
PARIS	1900	Exposition Universelle	48,130,300
SAINT LOUIS	1904	Louisiana Purchase Exposition	19,694,855
SAN FRANCISCO	1915	Panama Pacific Exposition	18,876,438
PARIS	1937	Exposition Internationale des Arts et Techniques	34,000,000
NEW YORK	1939	New York World's Fair 1939/1940	44,932,978
BRUSSELS	1958	Exposition Universelle et Internationale de Bruxelles ..	41,454,412
MONTREAL	1967	Universal and International Exhibition	50,860,802
OSAKA	1970	Japan World Exposition	65,210,770
PARIS	1989	Exposition Universelle	

The following list mentions the Exposition of international scope which aspired at being recognized as 'Universal' by concensus:

New York 1853, Florence 1861, London 1871, Sydney 1879, Melbourne 1880, Amsterdam 1883, Amsterdam 1885, Barcelona 1888, Brussels 1888, Anvers 1894, Amsterdam 1895, Brussels 1897, Glasgow 1901, Buffalo 1901, Liege 1905, Milan 1906, Brussels 1910, Gand 1913, Philadelphia 1926, Barcelona 1929, Brussels 1935, San Francisco 1939, Seattle 1962, New York 1964/65.

[~] Attendance

I N T R O D U C T I O N

- 1 In Great Britain, the usage is that a Fair is small, an Exhibition is large. The French term 'Exposition' has passed into English, although Americans simply transferred the word 'State Fair' to large and Universal Exhibitions and called them 'World's Fairs'. However, in this paper, "World's Fair" (USA), International Exhibition (GB) and Universal Exposition (F) are used almost interchangeably.
- 2 Expositions can be national or international; besides, they can be special or universal. Opposed to the Special Exhibitions which develop around a single and specific subject, the International Universal Exhibitions embrace products and displays concerning all branches of men's activity; foreign countries are invited to participate extensively. The International Universal Expositions, called by abbreviation 'Universal Expositions', have always been the most magnificent, especially in Paris
- 3 Between 1855 and 1900, Paris held five Universal Expositions upon a periodicity of eleven years, suggested by their spacing: 1855, 1867, 1878, 1889, 1900. The Expo 1937 was an attempt to revive the tradition which failed.

T H E M E O N E

- 1 Francois de Chateauneuf was the Ministry of the Interior Affairs during the beginning of the First Republic (1792).
- 2 The Second Empire was proclaimed in 1852
- 3 Goulette was publisher of the 'Est Republicain' newspaper.
- 4 Georges Berger II, in his Doctorat Thesis (1901) claims strong opposition to the holding of Universal Expositions and believes (in the light of the disappointments of 1900) that there could be no more Great Expositions. Economic data tend to support his points but his polemical tone makes his arguments suspect.

- 5 Frederic LePlay was a Saint Simonist who partly promoted the Universal Exposition's movement. As an engineer, he participated to the conceptualization of the two first Napoleonic Expositions.
- 6 In 1884, a group of businessmen became a recognized leader knowned as the CFEE, (Comité Français des Expositions à l'Etranger). The head, R. Sandoz, believed that his group had to counter the narrowly political policies of the governments.
- 7 The Bureau des Expositions Universelles, located in Paris, is in charge with the control and regulation of all Universal Expositions. It was actually incepted in 1931 upon international agreements that first appeared in 1867. It was only in 1928 that were produced the 'Convention regarding International Exhibitions', which is the basis of the present official agreements of the BIE.
- 8 LePlay felt that a demonstration of man's work could only ennoble him. The Expo of 1867 therefore emphasized educational and social matters. It also featured, as much as possible, machineries in motion and sequential displays showing products in the stage of manufacture.
- 9 Georges Berger II, (ref. to Bibliography)
- 10 " Compete, gravers, hammers and files
 Industrious brains, strong and courageous arms,
 Sons of Labor, your heads are splendid! ". Auguste Allais, 'Ode a l'Expostion'
 1855. (Transl. by the author). This grandiloquence shows the superficiality of the
 approach to the social question; it masked the reinforcement of conflicts which
 where to burst out in 1870.
- 11 LePay and Chevalier had both studied at the 'Ecole Polytechnique', had both participated in the 'coup' of Napoleon; their collaboration went to the point that Chevalier's daughter was to marry LePlay's son.
- 12 This tension owed to diplomatic fiascos in Mexico, Luxembourg, and in the Austro-Prussian War.
- 13 In 1870, the Commune marked the end of the Second Empire and was followed by the Franco-Prussian War in 1871.

- 14 From 1871 to 1875, the country is ruled by Mac Mahon, aristocratic executive. In 1875, the National Assembly was taken over by the Left Republican; the establishment of a new constitution launched the Third Republic. This led to a inevitable crisis originating from the conflict between a left Assembly and a Right executive.
- 15 Boulanger was a monarchist General who denounced the corruption of the Third Republic.
- 16 The Exposition of 1889 celebrated the Centennial of the French Revolution

T H E M E T W O

- 1 Marcel Dassault, buisnessman and manager of the biggest aeroplanes construction firm in France, is involved in politics for years; he is a Deputy at the National Assembly as 'President d'age'.
- 2 Mr Mitterand, active socialist, was elected President of the French Republic in May 1981.
- 3 " Paris dances still, but Paris is hungry and the riot begins to prowl". Max Pol-Fouchet in ' Histoire de Paris et des Parisiens'. (see Bibliography)
(translation of the author).
- 4 "Metamorphosis of the city, she is just an illusion. After the Dance of Death, now Paris waltzes". Ibid.
- 5 "They are delighted by the though of reaching this cardboard and plaster city through the permanent stone-site of Paris... They do not come to see a disguised and transvestized Paris...They come, attracted by this temporary union of an ephemeral city with a millenary one, by the association of the most eccentric city to the most real and tangible one..." Jean Giraudoux pp32. (Transl. by the author)
- 6 From 'Les Expositions Universelles de Paris', Pascal Ory.
- 7 Quoted in 'Urbanisme' #192.

T H E M E T H R E E

- 1 " All Fêtes have their ceremonial and their rite. A Fête is an escape from the present time-life which enters upon that of the myth and the holy, which changes reality by magic" Anne-Marie Lecoq quoted in Odile Ramette, ' Les architectures éphémères des années révolutionnaires'.
- 2 The Festival (and Fantasy) is vital to man's life. "Its loss severs man's root in the past and clips back its reach toward the future". Harvey Cox.
- 3 The Prince Napoleon believed that the awards were given for political reasons.
- 4 There were actually two types of innovations: that of technology, and that of a new relationship between this architecture and a sense of prestige, both were transcended by traditional styling.
- 5 From "Pour une économie politique du signe", Baudrillard, 1972 quoted in "Architectes", #115.
- 6 Lewis Mumford quoted in "Architectes" #115.

T H E M E F O U R

- 1 Mr Robert Bordaz is 'Président de l'Union Centrale des Arts Décoratifs', Paris. He was involved in the programming of the Centre Beaubourg and is now the head of the ' Mission de Préfiguration de l'Exposition Universelle de 1989'. The Mission is in charge with the definition of the spirit and the themes of the Exposition.
- 2 Apparently, the Frenchmen do not question the principle of holding a Universal Exposition. However, they extremely concerned by its implementation and question its feasibility and expected results. The favorite topics of polemic are: financing, and returns; centralization and congestion; traffic and number of visitors; transportation and housing. Besides, it seems that the public opinion is divided according to political convictions; the Left Wing seems , more than the Right, to approve the intentions of the Gouvernement. The Left Wing sees in this event a source of be-

nefits, whereas the Right Wing considers the whole thing as a derisive joke, as a waste of time and money.

- 3 The Mission is assisted in its task by a 'atelier d'urbanisme' which involves the participation of four architects: Renzo Piano, Antoine Grumbach, Vittorio Gregotti and Ionel Schein; a painter Martial Raysse and Ponthus Hulten, Director of the Museum of Modern Art of Los Angeles.
- 4 Paul Laurent, communist leader, said: "The implementation of great Works in the capital of Paris is a political challenge in the face of the Right Wing". We saw already that this Exposition is seen as a political act by the Government itself; but it seems also that it becomes a political 'device' in the hands of extremist Leftists, 'against' the Right. Apparently, contrary to the Expositions of the 19th century which served as attenuant remedies against Partis differences (see G. Chapman in 'The Third Republic of France', London 1962), the Exposition 89 should emphasize them (still according to the communist Parti!).
- 5 Policies of 'Great Works' were sometimes used as means to strive against unemployment problems in crisis times, by any type of Régime.
- 6 Furthermore, the Expo 89 should bring solutions to a series of urban problems; at the occasion of such an exceptional event, the transportation systems should be improved; the necessity of welcoming 6,000,000 of visitors should help to reconsider the housing problem: the Expo should induct new construction and renovations. etc...

 ILLUSTRATIONS. SOURCES.

THEME ONE

- 1 Allwood, 1977
- 2 Ory, 1982
- 3 Ibid .
- 4 Allwood, 1977
- 5 Ory, 1982
- 6 Allwood
- 7 Ory
- 8 Allwood
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- 10 Allwood
- 11 Ory
- 12 Benevolo, 1980
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- 14 Allwood
- 15 Ory

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- 1 Ory
- 2 Lavedan
- 3 Ory
- 4 Benevolo, 1971
- 5 Ibid.
- 6 Lavedan
- 7 Allwood
- 8 Baedeker, 1910
- 9 "Urbanisme", #192
- 10 Ibid.
- 11 Ory

THEME THREE

- 1 Allwood
- 2 Ibid
- 3 Lavedan
- 4 Ibid.
- 5 Ory
- 6 Lavedan
- 7 Badger
- 8 Mandell
- 9 Ibid.
- 10 Allwood
- 11 "Urbanisme", #192
- 12 Mandell
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- 14 Mandell
- 15 Ory
- 16 Ibid.
- 17 Ibid.
- 18 Ibid.
- 19 Ibid.
- 20 Ibid.

THEME FOUR

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- 2 Ibid.
- 3 Ibid.
- 4 Figaro Magazine.

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