

THE 
MIGHTY
FAIR /



Flushing Council on Culture & the Arts
136-73 41st Avenue
(between Main and Union Streets)
(718) 463-7700





**THE
MIGHTY
FAIR**

**New York World's Fair 1964-1965
A Retrospective**

From the Collections of
Peter M. Warner David Oats

June 21 — August 10, 1985

FLUSHING GALLERY

**A program of the Flushing Council
on Culture and the Arts, Inc.**

136-73 41st Avenue, Flushing, New York 11355

**Gallery Hours: Wednesday - Saturday, 10-5 p.m.
Sunday, 1-5 p.m.**

Expansion of Flushing Gallery is made possible through the generous support of Queens Borough President, Donald R. Manes; Con Edison, Queens Division; New York Telephone; Dragone Brothers; and Joseph Gherardi. Gallery hours for this exhibition have been expanded to include Sundays through the support of the Flushing Meadows - Corona Park World's Fair Association.

This program is supported, in part, by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs. The exhibition is also made possible, in part, with public funds from the New York State Council on the Arts.

WELCOME TO THE FAIR

The Fair aims to be universal, to have something for everyone.

What is it you want? Vast forces dormant in nuggets of imprisoned sunlight? Machines that fly, think, transport, fashion and do man's work? Spices, perfumes, ivory, apes and peacocks? Dead Sea Scrolls? Images divine and graven? Painted lilies and refined gold? The products of philosophy, which is the guide of life, and knowledge, which is power? We have them all.

Study the Fair. Come often. When you get here, don't rush. Be wise. Space your visits; save your arches, spare your muscles, use your head; patronize buses, rolling stock, rides, ramps and escalators; spot the oases and cultivate repose in the midst of multifarious activities.

We welcome you to the Fair.

ROBERT MOSES

*President
New York World's Fair 1964/1965
(From his introduction to the
official World's Fair Guide Book)*



Robert Moses
New York's Master Builder
(1888 - 1981)

The Promised Land Of Mr. Moses

By OGDEN NASH

Author of "The Adventures of
Isabel" and other books of verse.

WHENCE, oh whence, did the Fair appear?
Out of the nowhere into the here.
Did it just spring up in a flash when bidden?
No, you can bet your life it didden.
How was the marsh grass changed to roses?
By a crusty magician, name of Moses.
He'll make you, while turning a somersault,
Good bricks without straw, good beer without malt,
He'll build you a mansion out of knot holes,
Or a garden out of a mess of pot holes.
He looked at a waste of mud and sand,

And Moses envisioned a Promised Land.
Then Moses he called upon the Lord,
And RCA and DuPont and Ford,
GE, he had a word with them,
As well as Chrysler and IBM,
And he lured to his fantastic island
Nations from Mexico to Thailand.
That's why you can murmur Oh and Ah
At Michelangelo's Pieta,
Or even give out with reverent Oohs
When Elsie the Cow in person moos.
You'll find it a change from your daily chores
To gaze at the monstrous dinosaurs
From the era when Earth was embryonic;
They are genuine Audio-anamorphic.
Then of future modes you can be an adopter,
You can skitter around in an aquacopter,
Or ride up on a thing called the People Wall
To a lofty ovoid cinema hall,
And forget the traffic upon the highway
When the Time Tunnel meets the Magic Skyway.
If you're mad about Polynesian girls
Entrancing divers will bring you pearls,
Or should you prefer a mausoleum
You can spend one hour in the Wax Museum.
You can take your shoes, with the other scuffers,

To be shined for free by powered buffers.
You can gaze on the replica, fit for a houri,
Of the marvelous Mondop of Saburi,
And while in an Oriental mood
You can find the proper exotic food
At the International Gourmet Snack Bar,
Fit for the Mogul emperor Akbar.
Next you can penetrate, happy tourist,
Deep in the strange Enchanted Forest,
Where, clad in a dainty enchanted bodice,
Mayhap you will meet the Enchanted Goddess.
The Enchanted Goddess! Who can she be?
The American Housewife, that's who's she!
If you're overpowered by her arts alchemic
You can enter the Hospital Atodemic,
And three thousand Pinkerton brave police
Will keep an eye on your daughter or niece.
Meanwhile, I shall be goggling at
Washington's sword and Lincoln's hat.

So fret not, parents, or tear your hair
And wonder why Johnnie's so long at the Fair.
And Johnnie, not fume and foam
If your parents are late in getting home;
Nobody departs, until it closes,
From the Promised Land of Mr. Moses.

FOREWARD AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

FLUSHING GALLERY is proud to present THE MIGHTY FAIR as the fourth exhibition in our expanded professional gallery located in the heart of vibrant, multi-cultural downtown Flushing.

THE MIGHTY FAIR offers a change of pace for the gallery. Dedicated to building a haven of beauty where lovers of art and culture can find nourishment and spiritual renewal, the Flushing Council on Culture and the Arts believes that this look back at an important part of our community heritage is an essential element in the appreciation of our borough's rich contribution to world history. At the same time we hope that this exhibit is an enjoyable summer-time excursion back to the great New York World's Fair of 1964-1965.

The New York World's Fair of 1964-1965 was one of the biggest spectacles ever staged in this country — a billion dollar extravaganza that dwarfs the other fairs that followed it. While there have been a number of films, books, exhibits and retrospectives on the 1939-40 New York World's Fair, there has never been a look back at the second Flushing Meadow exposition. This exhibit at FLUSHING GALLERY will begin to correct this historical oversight and the twentieth anniversary of the fair is the right time to take a look at this massive undertaking.

The fair marked an important milestone in the life of the Flushing community. In addition to bequeathing Queens County with its principal cultural — recreational complex at Flushing Meadows — Corona Park, it was also the first fair in history to showcase the newly emerging nations of the post-war era. Many of these nationalities remained in Flushing after the fair and they now give our community its unique and varied international flavor. This exhibit of the MIGHTY FAIR is a celebration and tribute to this.

We extend our heartfelt thanks and gratitude to David Oats and Peter Warner, who conceived this exhibit, provided the material in it, and guided this project from inception to completion. It was a labor of love which has resulted in an exhibition that is both informative and entertaining.

We hope that this exhibit provides our community with a renewed sense of cultural pride.

Dennis Donnelly
President

Jo-Ann Jones
Executive Director

June 19, 1985
Flushing Council on Culture and the Arts, Inc.



Official medalion of the New York
World's Fair 1964-65.



Commemorative U.S. postage stamp.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

For longer than man's memory or his records run, he has been "going to the fair." The origin of fairs is lost in the mists of time but few of mankind's customs have been more durable or have left a deeper impression upon his life. In poetry, language, literature, song and scripture they can be found.

Some of the fairs of antiquity were small; others were great national markets. From the small-town rural fairs to the modern-day urban fairs that celebrate the streets and ethnic cultures of our neighborhoods, they have played an often overlooked but significant role in all our lives.

A world's fair is an art form, a combination of beauty and bombast, and is the expression of a complex idea involving trade, the arts, national, local, and individual prestige, uplift, and the universal hankering for a holiday.

New York, the premier city of the world, has staged two international expositions at Flushing Meadows in the past forty years. The 1939-1940 fair has already achieved the historical status as a major social event of this century. However, up until now the 1964-1965 fair has been largely ignored as an undertaking of historic note.

A whole generation has grown up since the 1964-1965 fair and now we can take a fresh look at this exposition as a fascinating mirror to those bigger-than-life boom years of the mid-sixties. Not even the sky was the limit in this fair of rockets and moon-buggies, Mustangs and Picturephones. When we look back at the magnitude of this enterprise we realize that we are unlikely to ever see its like again.

This was a mighty fair. Its buildings, exhibits, infrastructure, fountains and events were monumental. So were its problems and shortcomings. But to most of the 50 million visitors to the fair, despite its hodge-podge design and artless, corporate outlook, the fair was alive, vital and vivid. With its complex variety of forms and colors, from the giant clusters of balloons that marked the Brass Rail Hot Dog stands throughout the grounds and the multi-colored cable cars that swung over the international area, to the ancient pagodas and mammoth dinosaurs that were spread out over the square mile of the meadow, the fair was a vibrant, pop-art celebration of the early sixties.

The gallery exhibit, like the fair, tells its story through a collage of ephemera — pamphlets, souvenirs, posters, memorabilia, photographs, models, music and film. This catalogue attempts to provide a perspective on the messages behind these trinkets and artifacts of a world and a fair that exist no more.

David Oats
Peter M. Warner
Co-Curators





Birth Of The Fair

The New York World's Fair of 1964-65 was born in the final summer of the 1950's. President Eisenhower was in the White House, Sputnik and Little Rock, Arkansas were just beginning to rattle the teacups of an otherwise seemingly contented and affluent nation at the pinnacle of world supremacy.

On August 10, 1959, the New York Times headlined "World's Fair Here in '64; Planned at Half Billion Cost." The article stated that the proposed fair would be "bigger than any exposition anywhere" and that it would be held in 1964-1965 to celebrate the 300th anniversary of the founding of New York City in 1664 under the British crown.

Thomas J. Deegan, Jr., a New York public relations man, was the chairman of the civic committee proposing the fair idea and the Times quoted him as saying "I have discussed the idea with Mayor Robert F. Wagner of the possibility of a major league baseball stadium on the Flushing Meadows site. The fair and the stadium would feed each other." Deegan noted that the city's powerful master builder and commissioner of parks, Robert Moses, had agreed that the 1,258 acres at Flushing Meadows in Queens was available for such a purpose. In Washington, a coalition of New York's Senators and Congressmen introduced a resolution urging President Eisenhower to designate the fair and invite foreign nations to participate.

The President agreed. It was 1960.

Genesis Of The Idea

The idea of a New York World's Fair was conceived by an idealistic New York lawyer named Robert Kopple, who back in 1958 reminisced with some friends about the things he had seen and learned at the 1939-1940 New York World's Fair and told them he thought another fair was just what the kids needed to wise up about the wide world.

The 1939-1940 fair was a watershed event of epic proportions. It has come to symbolize a turning point both for American society and the world. It was conceived in the depression and ran its course on the crest of world upheaval. It rose, phoenix-like out of the ashes of the

infamous 'Valley of Ashes' immortalized by F. Scott Fitzgerald in the *Great Gatsby* in what was the greatest single reclamation project of its time. The fair's theme symbols, the Tylon and Perisphere, were startling icons of a future age which the fair assured its visitors was on the way if American democracy and know-how would triumph over the forces of despotism and despair. George Gershwin wrote the fair's theme song and called it "The Dawn of a New Day" and the organizers took seriously the exposition's theme of "Building the World of Tomorrow with the Tools of Today."

General Motors had the most popular exhibit, the Futurama, showing the highways and cities of 1960. Billy Rose staged his "Aquacade" and the fair was the place to be and be seen. The 'World of Tomorrow' which the fair heralded was actually launched on the opening day of the exposition. When President Franklin D. Roosevelt stepped up to the podium to officially open the fair, he faced a new device along with the familiar battery of newsreel cameras and radio microphones — a television camera. RCA launched for the first time in American history, a regular television broadcast at the opening of the Fair. Few at the time realized that the medium that would shape the future was being born right before their eyes. Fewer still could imagine that another man on the podium that opening day would shortly write a letter to President Roosevelt that would also change the world forever. Dr. Albert Einstein officiated at the official night lighting of the fair. Two months later he would inform the president of the possibilities of a terrible new weapon, thus launching the dawn of the atomic age. As the lights began to go out across Europe in 1939-1940, the fair gallantly strived to press forward its optimistic vision of tomorrow. It gave the world a boost. To those that were there it was the greatest fair. It told people what they wanted to hear; that their spirit wasn't broken and that by controlling technology, destiny in hand, they were ready to face the dawn of a new day. New York Times writer Helen Harrison has said of the fair, "By and large people went to the fair to be amazed, amused and distracted. That they also came away affected, educated — changed — was a function of both the fair and the era that gave it meaning."

New York World's Fair 1939-1940 at
Flushing Meadows.



The Fair Corporation

After the war there were precious few municipal funds to establish the great park on the fairgrounds that Commissioner Moses had envisioned prior to the fair. The establishment of the United Nations however offered the opportunity to make certain improvements to the post-fair Flushing Meadows. From 1946-1950 the U.N. General Assembly occupied the N.Y. City Building as its first headquarters. But Moses' dream of a great municipal park at the city's geographic and population center was not realized until the idea of a second international exposition was proposed. When the New York World's Fair 1964-1965 Corporation was set up, the officers chose Robert Moses as its president.

Moses seized on the enterprise as the vehicle to completing his long time dream of establishing a great park on the site of what was once the domain of Fishhooks McCarthy's ash and garbage dump. It would be the capstone to a long, illustrious career as New York's Master Builder of bridges and roads, power dams and beaches.

The Fair Corporation leased the parkland from the city and proceeded to organize one of the largest public events ever staged.

The Olympics of Progress

Robert Moses called the upcoming fair "The Olympics of Progress" and he lured sixty five nations, twenty eight states of the union and the giants of industry to the fair. In addition, the Olympic Trials of 1964 were staged at the fair, the new Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts was constructed as part of the fair's cultural contribution to the city and Shea Stadium was built in tandem with the fair. A massive network of new roadways was constructed to bring visitors to the fair, including the Long Island Expressway, the Van Wyck Expressway and the widening of the Grand Central Parkway.

John F. Kennedy was now in the White House and the vigorous space-age optimism of the New Frontier permeated the Fair's planning. The theme would be "Peace through Understanding", celebrating "Man's Achievements on a Shrinking Globe in an Expanding Universe." These themes would be expressed by the fair's symbol, the Unisphere, a huge stainless steel globe erected by U.S. Steel depicting the earth surrounded by the orbital rings of the first U.S. and Soviet satellites. It was built to stand permanently in the park and it rests on the piles and foundations which were originally set for the Tylon and Persphere.

President Kennedy enthusiastically endorsed the fair and came to Flushing Meadows in 1962 to break ground for the United States Pavilion. In Rome, Pope John XXIII officiated at a ceremony where a radio signal transmitted to Flushing Meadows began pile-driving for the Vatican Pavilion which would exhibit Michaelangelo's Pieta. By the time the fair was ready to open in 1964, both of these figures would be gone and the world in which this fair was conceived would begin to change forever.



President John F. Kennedy visits the fair site and views model of the Fair, December 1962. Fair president Robert Moses (left) Mayor Robert F. Wagner (right).



Pope John XXIII sends radio signal to Flushing Meadows to begin construction of Vatican Pavilion, 1962.

Civil Rights demonstration, opening day, April 22, 1964.



Opening Day

April 22, 1964 was the opening day of the fair. After four years of preparations the mightiest event ever staged in New York was ready for its first visitors. Not all came to celebrate. The Congress of Racial Equality targeted the opening of the fair to dramatize the injustices practiced by some of the exhibitors, such as the state of Louisiana, Florida and a number of corporations. Chanting "Freedom Now" the protesters nearly drowned out the remarks of President Lyndon B. Johnson as he dedicated the United States Pavilion. This was a foretaste of the era of protest and turmoil. International galas were no longer immune to the voices of anger and change.

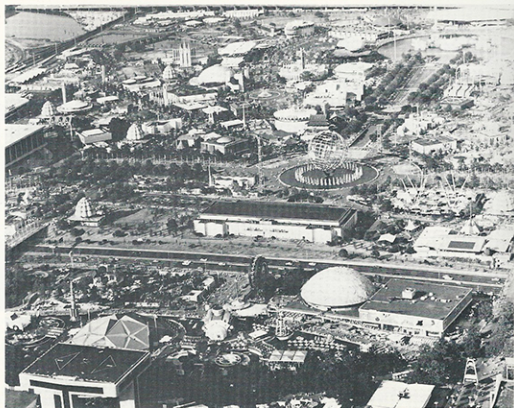
The opening ceremonies were held in the Singer Bowl arena through a light drizzle and an impressive array of dignitaries including India's Indira Gandhi, Governor Nelson Rockefeller, former president Harry S. Truman and President Johnson dedicated the fair. In his remarks, President Johnson said; "I understand that at the close of the Fair, a time capsule will be placed in the ground. Every possible precaution has been taken to make sure that it will be opened several thousand years from now. Special metals have been used. Records of its location will be stored around the world. They have only neglected one vital precaution: they do not have an advance commitment from Robert Moses that when the time finally comes, he will let them dig it up.

"The Fair represents the most promising of our hopes. It gathers together from 60 countries the achievements of industry; the health of nations; the creations of man. This Fair shows us what man at his most creative and constructive is capable of doing. But unless we can achieve the theme of this Fair, 'Peace Through Understanding'; unless we can use our skill and our wisdom to conquer conflict, as we have conquered science — then our hopes of today, these proud achievements, will go under in the devastation of tomorrow.

"And so I take my leave of what Ogden Nash has called the Promised Land of Mr. Moses, hoping and trusting that in the future it will not take anyone forty years to reach it."



President Lyndon Johnson greets Robert Moses at the opening ceremonies in the Singer Bowl. Former President Harry Truman (left) Governor Nelson Rockefeller, (right).



On the evening of April 22, 1964, after the rains had stopped, the President had left in his helicopter, and the demonstrators and the dignitaries had departed, the New York World's Fair of 1964-65 was ready to begin.

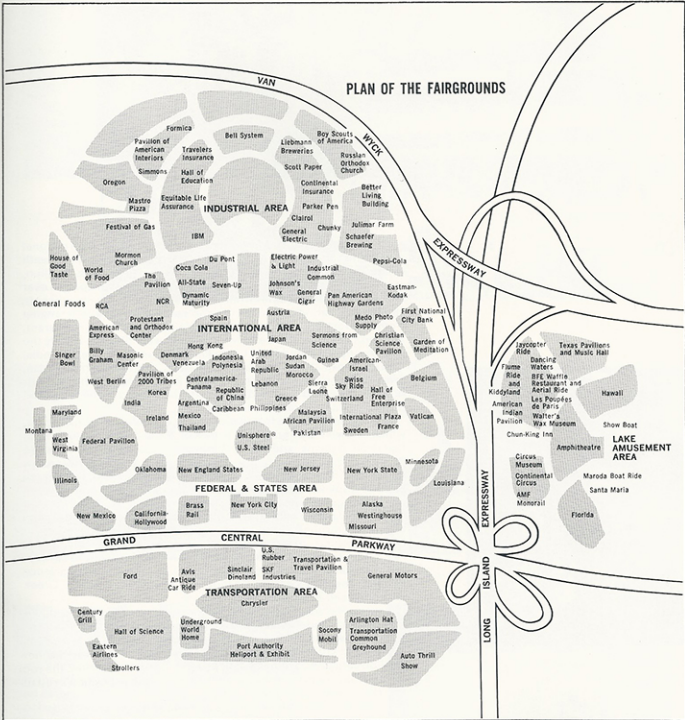
NBC Television, which 25 years before at the opening of the 1939 Fair had inaugurated regular commercial television broadcasts, devoted 90 minutes of prime-time coverage to a special news and entertainment program of the Fair — hosted by David Brinkley, Broadway star Carol Channing, and actor Henry Fonda. The nationwide broadcast utilized two newly perfected innovations — color and videotape — to dramatize the wonders that could be found at the 646 acres of Flushing Meadows.

The broadcast ended with the fountain and fireworks display at the Fountain of the Planets and the first playing of the Fair's official theme song, a march called "Fair is Fair," which had been composed by Richard Rodgers. Paul Lavalle, the Fair's official bandleader, conducted the premier concert of "World's Fair Suite," a symphony written for the Fair by the well-known composer Ferde Grofe.

By the next day, the Fair belonged to the people. Once again, they came to the Meadows by the thousands, from the five boroughs of the city and from the four corners of the world. They came by jet plane landing at the newly enlarged JFK International Airport, and the modernized LaGuardia Airport. They arrived by boat at the new World's Fair Marina on Flushing Bay, and by helicopter atop the roof of the Port Authority Heliport which housed the exposition's restaurant, the exclusive "Top of the Fair."

They came by car, with the license plates of the 50 states side by side in the parking lots with the autos bearing the plates of the Empire State, which once again proclaimed "New York World's Fair." And, of course, they came by subway and Long Island Rail Road. The boardwalk overpass at Willets Point ushered in millions of visitors through the Main Entrance to this world of flag-lined streets and fountained walkways.

PLAN OF THE FAIRGROUNDS



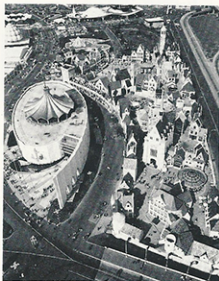


The International Area

The cable cars that swung in procession high over the International area of the Fair gave the viewer a birds-eye tour of the world beneath as the cars ascended from the alpine lodge of the Swiss Pavilion, crossed by the mighty model of earth, the Unisphere, and passed over a variety of exotic pavilions from around the world. In a village of huts, 26 emerging nations of the African continent offered exhibits ranging from tribal arts and dances to caged lions and a tree house restaurant. Rare bronzes, porcelains and ivory carvings were displayed inside the pagoda-shaped Republic of China Pavilion. Denmark, Greece, India, Ireland, Japan, Korea, Lebanon, Pakistan, the Philippines, Sudan, Sweden, Venezuela, the United Arab Republic and other nations brought the world to New York, despite the boycott of the Fair by the Bureau of International Expositions.

The highlights of the International area were the pavilion of Spain, which showed the great art works of Picasso, Miro, along with flamenco dancing and three fabulous restaurants. The Mexican Pavilion offered an hourly outdoor performance by spectacular Aztec "birdmen." Thailand had an exquisite golden shrine, and the Israeli Pavilion displayed the original Dead Sea Scrolls. The Vatican Pavilion was a setting of serene beauty and housed one of the greatest works of art - Michelangelo's Pieta, which was viewed from a moving ramp that passed through a dark setting with Gregorian Chants sounding in the background. That pavilion was the second most attended at the Fair. Other religions represented were the Mormons, whose pavilion was a replica of the temple at Sale Lake City; the Christian Science Pavilion, the Billy Graham Pavilion, the Protestant Pavilion, Greek Orthodox and American-Israel Pavilion.

Controversy surrounded two pavilions in this area. The government of Indonesia, under Presiden Sukarno, disagreed with Fair President Robert Moses over rental payment for space, and after a verbal battle in the world's press, Moses closed the Indonesian Pavilion. The Jordan Pavilion contained a mural that depicted a Palestinian woman and her child with a plea to the world on behalf of the displaced Palestinians in the Holy Land. Local Jewish groups demanded that the mural be removed and demonstrations were held at the site. The Fair refused to remove it, but agreed to allow leaflets to be distributed nearby, responding to the mural's message. King Hussein of Jordan personally visited the Fair to present a permanent gift to the park - an ancient piece of architecture called the "Whispering Column of Jerash." Other heads of state to visit the Fair were Chung Hee Park of South Korea. Anastasio Somoza of Nicaragua, President Lopez of Mexico, and the Shah of Iran.



Vatican Pavilion and Belgian Village.



Pavilion of the Republic of China.



Pavilion of India.



Thailand Pavilion.



African Pavilion.



Korean Pavilion.



King Hussein of Jordan on his visit to the Jordanian Pavilion in April, 1964. A mural in the Jordan pavilion on the Palestinians ignited a furor and prompted daily picketing and demonstrations by protesters who demanded that it be removed.

Artist Andy Warhol was commissioned to paint a large outdoor mural to be displayed on the walls of the N.Y. State Pavilion. His work consisted of portraits of the ten most wanted men (detail shown here). The painting triggered such controversy that it was removed just prior to the fair's opening.



Richard and Pat Nixon at the Futurama.

(Left to right) Adlai Stevenson, Robert Moses and Walt Disney at the opening of Disney's Lincoln exhibit at the Illinois Pavilion, April 1964.



The criticism that seemed to plague the Fair's first season was especially directed towards the zone around the Meadow Lake area that had been dubbed the "Amusement" area of the Fair. There were a few good attractions, such as the log flume ride and the AMF Monorail that encircled the sector. But the Fair's emphasis on good, clean fun, seemed to many, a lack of fun. Unlike the 1939 Fair, the area barred girlie and garish side show attractions. By the Fair's second season, the area was improved by the addition of a water ski show at the old Aquacade, and a dancing porpoise spectacular at the adjacent Florida Pavilion. Goldie Hawn was discovered at the Fair as a "go-go" girl at the Louisiana Pavilion.

Between Fair seasons, the local critics blamed Moses for what they termed the Fair's lack of fun and the disappointing attendance of the 1964 run. However, it was evident that fair visitors merely were avoiding the paid "amusements" of the Lake area because there were so many free spectacular amusements provided throughout the rest of the exposition by the various corporations and international pavilions. Moses survived an attempt to replace him as Fair President.

Industry and Transportation

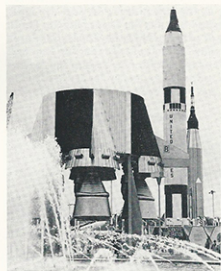
The large corporations provided the most spectacular pavilions at the fair, erecting giant structures with complex exhibits telling the world that the land of prosperity was here to stay. With no thoughts of the energy crises ahead, the big three auto companies vied to show off the newest and biggest gas guzzlers. Henry Ford II and Lee Iacocca unveiled the Mustang for the first time at the Ford Pavilion. The fair's most popular exhibit, just as in 1939, was General Motors' Futurama II. Riding in sound equipped chairs the visitor was taken on a trip through a future world under the ocean, in the Antarctic, on the surface of the moon and in a great city of tomorrow.

Bell Telephone erected a "floating wing" structure which contained a ride through the history of communication and showed off a brand new device — the Picturephone. IBM had an egg-shaped structure surrounded by a forest of steel trees. Fairgoers were lifted into the "egg" on a large grandstand called the "People Wall". Inside IBM gave a preview of the day when computers would become part of everybody's lives — a far-out notion back in 1965. At the General Electric pavilion the "wonders of atomic energy" were on display and an actual demonstration of nuclear fusion took place every fifteen

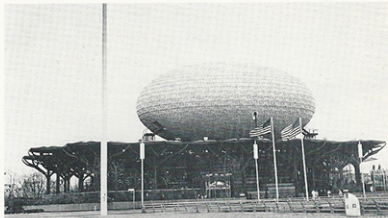
Bell System Pavilion.



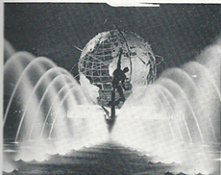
U.S. Space Park.



Port Authority Heliport.
Top Of The Fair Restaurant.



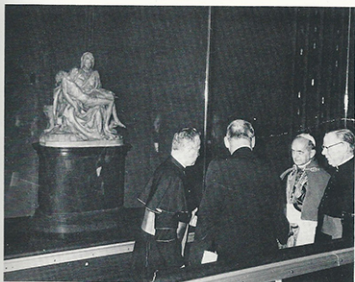
IBM Pavilion.



Unisphere and central Mall at night.



Water and fireworks show at the Fountain of the Planets.



Pope Paul VI visiting the Vatican Pavilion and Michelangelo's Pieta.

minutes. This was all part of a pavilion that extolled the limitless uses of electricity through a Walt Disney designed show with the theme "There's a Great Big Beautiful Tomorrow."

Disney was fascinated with the fair and he created four pavilions in which he perfected a new robot animation process called audio-animatronics. The Illinois pavilion has a Disney — created Abraham Lincoln and the Pepsi-Cola pavilion featured hundreds of animated dolls of different nationalities singing "It's a Small World." Disney later brought these innovations to use at Disney World and EPCOT Center in Florida.

There were two surprise hits of the fair. One was the Johnson's Wax pavilion which featured a multi-screen non-commercial film on the joy of living. The other was a taste treat of strawberries, whipped cream and batter called the Belgian Waffle. They were on sale at the Belgian Village, a full scale replica of a 17th century Flemish town — an exhibit so complex that it was completed only a few months before the fair closed in 1965.

As the fair neared its final days the crowds increased and this assemblage of sixty five nations, twenty eight states and scores of industrial giants would have been visited by over 50 million people.

In 1965 the Beatles gave a concert at Shea Stadium. The pope visited the Vatican Pavilion and his call for "No more war, war never again" was directed at the growing conflict in Vietnam. In the Westinghouse Time Capsule II, buried for 5,000 years adjacent to the first capsule deposited at the 1939 fair, they put in a computer memory unit, a Polaroid camera, credit cards, a piece of a satellite, an antibiotic drug and birth control pills.

On October 17, 1965 the fair closed its gates; the coming sea-change of the turbulent sixties was about to put an end to an era as well. The fair's investors were paid back sixty cents on the dollar and Robert Moses restored the site as the great city park he had dreamed of thirty years before. When the Fair Corporation handed Flushing Meadow park back to the City of New York in 1967, Moses said "Guard it well, Mr. Mayor and Mr. Parks Commissioner. It has echoed to the sounds of many footsteps and voices. The world has beaten a path to its doors. Now we return it to the natives".



Souvenir holder for dime which would actually be made radioactive at an exhibit in the Hall of Science. Fairgoers could place this dime next to a geiger counter just to make sure that the memento was neutron irradiated.



Visitors line up to see an actual demonstration of nuclear fusion in the General Electric Pavilion—an event that occurred every 15 minutes.



See the up-to-the-minute story of the population explosion at the Equitable Pavilion

Every 7½ seconds a baby is born in the U.S.A. Every 18½ seconds someone dies in the U. S. A. Every 11 seconds our population increases by one.

See it for yourself: the whole, fascinating story of our changing population—on the Demograph at the Equitable Pavilion.

A gigantic mechanical marvel, the Demograph shows, minute by minute, how each of our states contributes to the dramatic cycle of births and deaths. It also portrays many other interesting aspects of the U.S. population.

Be sure to see the Equitable Demograph. You'll find it on The Pool of Industry, with its Fountain of the Planets.



Right page...
General Motors Futurama II

Ad for the Equitable Pavilion's Demograph which showed the population explosion of the mid 1960's.



PM
Palatul Poporului



Fairgoers could sign their name in a book which was microfilmed and included in the Time Capsules.



Westinghouse officials look over contents of objects selected to be placed in Time Capsule II. Items represent the vast changes in society over the quarter century since the deposit of the first Time Capsule at the 1939-1940 Worlds Fair. The telephone books represent the number of pages of microfilmed information contained in the capsule. As was done with Time Capsule I, records of its location were sent all over the world.



Scientists packing the contents in to Westinghouse Time Capsule II.



Time Capsule II being deposited next to original 1938 Time Capsule, October 16, 1965.

Night View by the Fountain
Of The Planets.



Closing day, October 17, 1965.



THE FAIR THAT DIDN'T KNOW ITS OWN STRENGTH

AN ESSAY

1965, the Fair's closing year, marks the midway point between the end of World War II and where we stand today. We would be well-advised to distance ourselves from this Fair and the passage of twenty years is finally giving us the chance.

This was perhaps the largest array of exhibits ever assembled at one time in one place. Its expanse was great enough to house every American Fair held since within its borders. However, unlike San Antonio, '68, Spokane, '74, Knoxville, '82 and the recent Fair in New Orleans, the Mighty Fair was a once-in-a-lifetime experience. How utterly absurd that the experience is so forgettable.

Historians have always found it hard to be kind to this Fair. Its predecessor insisted on using itself as a forum to teach as well as entertain. Fairgoers were given what was considered good for them by a distinguished panel of urban planners, industrial designers and social theorists. The new Fair considered itself educational for purposes of tax exemption only. Though its President, Robert Moses took the high road in banning topless dancing and seedy "midway attractions", he enraged the idealogues in refusing to limit the number of concessions or regulate the size of Fair Pavilions — a far cry from the unified Flushing Meadows presided over by the Trylon and Perisphere:

Critic A: These buildings are obtrusive.
Moses: Why should someone put all that money into a building and not get noticed.

Critic B: This is commercialism run amok.
Moses: No, this is uninhibited ingenuity.

Both 1939 and 1964 are situated on the crest of historic upheaval; '39 between the Depression and World War; '64 on the pinnacle of American supremacy and the Vietnam War. Perhaps the major difference between the historic perception of the two New York Fairs lies in the five year periods that proceed each. By 1945 the nation was ready to embrace the World of Tomorrow they had witnessed at the '39 Fair. In the same time frame after the last Fair, we were too busy questioning everything from

A.M.F. Monorail in the Lake Amusement area.



atomic reactors to sex roles to wonder very much about the pipedreams of the previous era. Today the Fair's attitudes seem more the product of senility than progress. It's forecasts traveled down the same path as its monorail system—they came from some place and led to nowhere. Everything it celebrated was consumed by fire, i.e. the Cambodian rain forests; never caught on, i.e. picturephones; or trickled out completely, i.e. the national birth rate.

The failure of the picturephone warrants special mention. Rarely has the next logical step in technical innovation been rejected so resoundingly by consumers. AT&T had confused the visualization of a one-way medium (radio) with the interactive telephone. Speaking long distance to a perfect stranger in Disneyland was harmless enough. But what if this were a grandparent talking to a grandchild and the question of when the family was going to come visit arose. Would we be willing to admit that televised contact was suitable substitute for flesh and blood? In 1964 we didn't want to ask and our reluctance was so apparent that the Bell people didn't even consider color picturephones as the answer to the black and white ones.

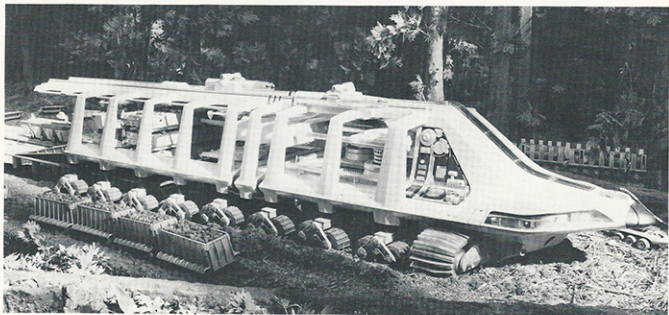
If the Fair was not particularly imaginative, there was no end to its novelty. General Motor's FUTURAMA II gave us condos in the ice caps. Underwater vacations and manned lunar stations all of where space was said to be "wasted." Such notions of conservation in today's world would beget all the charm of James Watt addressing the Sierra Club:

"... The boys will still be building roads all right, but in more improbable places—right through tropical jungles for instance. The way they tell it, there's going to be a monstrous road-building machine, a factory on wheels, a juggernaut that gobbles the forest primeval, chews it up, digests it, and extrudes it as a neat ribbon of pavement for the tourist of the future..."

It sounds like Buck Rodgers to us now. But the designers who created these dioramas weren't selling sheer escapism. Indeed NEWSWEEK wrote their biggest challenge was "projecting technology far enough ahead so that it wouldn't be outdated too soon as was GM's 1939 show."



Fairgoers step in to sound-equipped chairs for the Bell System Pavilion ride.



Giant jungle eating machine paves a highway in the General Motors Futurama II.

Not all goods marketed at the Fair were duds. But beyond particular products, the greatest watershed was in softsell advertising, i.e. instead of this year's model, companies construct pavilions to peddle their own good taste to large, receptive audiences. Though the shuttling of fairgoers was done in the traditional pre-me generation zeal for conformity, (note the omnipresent numbers on the sides of the AT&T chairs) some companies were raising softsell to a corporate art form. At the forefront was IBM whose main product — the computer — was still microchips away from domestication. The designers avoided the conveyor belt mentality of the car company exhibits and instead of showing off their latest line, they talked about how their equipment pales in comparison to ours; specifically how lucky we are to have brains and “how a computer does its mechanical best to emulate our cerebration.”

Such exhibits embodied the push button world of nuclear age humanity envisioned in 1939. As divergent as the organizations of these two enterprises were, there were also grounds for agreement. What better way to answer the last Fair than with the assertion that the products it introduced were now virtually inseparable from the society it foresaw.

Everything from television to nylon was hailed in 1939 as a step forward against the gathering forces of darkness. The Fair built a mythical rainbow and visitors made the leap of faith across from one era to the next. The 1964 Fair had no such lofty purpose. It was the pot of gold at the journey's end. There was little suspense aside from unveiling the next big thing — be it color television, nuclear fission or Belgian waffles. But if 1964 was the culmination of 1939, then what are we to 1964?

Perhaps this is the wrong question. Maybe we should be asking whether we'll ever have the chance to answer 1964. What are the odds on staging another megafair in the next 25 year interval? Not very good.

Civic officials shudder at the thought of another megafair. Times are leaner and the city bosses are gone, leaving a more open if less decisive power structure. Some historians are quick to point out that Fairs have lost center stage to competing forces and that today's audiences are less excitable — even jaded. (Twenty years ago, Duke Wayne was still making westerns while today intergalactic gunfights are strictly passe.)

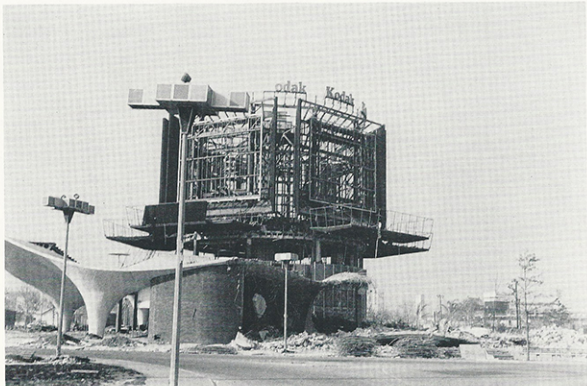


Picture Phone in use at the Bell System Pavilion.



But 1964 was also a world of television (albeit no VCRs), jet travel (okay no jumbos), and Disneyland (EPCOT was slated for Flushing Meadows at the close of the Fair before Moses told Disney just whose Park this was). Yet it drew more visitors than any fair before or since.

What was once plausible is now prohibitive and the main factor is cost. In these austere times we can ill-afford to live off the fat of the land like the last Fair did. Our moderate efforts would only remind us how massive the Mighty Fair really was. Even today we can't maintain its few remaining vestiges. It dwarfs our piecemeal efforts in public works and in party throwing. The most ambitious global event staged since, the 1984 Olympics, subsisted on volunteers, pre-existing structures, donations and a budget that wouldn't intimidate the Salvation Army. The Mighty Fair though was a boondoggle in the classic sense. The city shelled out a tidy sum to fix the roads, the unions reaped a windfall and no one worked for free.



Demolition of the Kodak Pavilion,
November 1965.

Nowadays the New York State Pavilion serves as little more than a guidepost for shadow traffic. The Hall of Science still displays the booster rockets from the manned space launches of the sixties. That was back when everyone was going to the moon. Eastman Kodak provided a moonscape for family snapshots: "Those kids will be running the country by the next century. Better catch them while they're still earthbound you shutterbugs!"

And now all these years later inside the weed-infested space park, one is moved to nostalgia, even sadness. These missiles are less forboding than the ones that hide in silos and submarines. In the age of Star Wars, they remind us dutifully of the day we came in peace "for all mankind."

The 1964-65 New York World's Fair called itself "the most photographed event of all time." Its buildings posed outlandishly until the parting photo opportunities. Then they gratefully bowed to the wrecking ball as if they had grown tired of defying gravity, and some would say, good taste. Yet behind its limited vision lurks a giant that never knew its own strength. History has a place for this event. Now we scorn its pleasure-bent ways and laughable outlook. But if it wasn't terribly perceptive, it was prolific. Perhaps it will always be relegated to a dubious milestone. For this the Mighty Fair has earned our wrath — and our envy. ■

THE MIGHTY FAIR

Gallery Exhibition, Catalogue and Videotape Copyright 1985, David Oats, Peter Warner, Flushing Council on Culture and the Arts.

Peter M. Warner at the Theme Center, Expo 70, Osaka, Japan.



CO-CURATORS

Peter M. Warner

Peter M. Warner is considered one of the world's foremost experts on World's Fairs and International Expositions. He began collecting and researching material on international expositions in 1958 at the time of the Brussels World's Fair. He has visited nine fairs since including Expo '67 in Montreal, the Osaka Expo in 1970 and the recent American fairs in Spokane, Knoxville and New Orleans. Peter Warner visited the New York World's Fair 1964-1965 over sixty times and his collection of fair documents and memorabilia contains extensive materials from all fairs beginning with the first one in London in 1851. He is a founder and past president of the World's Fair Collectors Society.



David Oats (center) looking over model of the 1964-1965 New York World's Fair with Robert Moses (right) and former Queens Borough President Mario Cariello, 1975.

David Oats

David Oats has been active in preserving the history of Flushing Meadows Park since 1962 when at the age of 12 he met Robert Moses, the president of the 1964-65 World's Fair. In later years he worked with Moses on the development of the post-fair park. In 1967 he founded the Flushing Meadows — Corona Park Association, a civic group dedicated to preserving the former fair site. He served as a staff assistant to the late Senator Robert F. Kennedy, was Editor-in-Chief of the Queens Tribune newspapers from 1975-1982 and is an official of the Queens Chamber of Commerce. He has been involved in a wide variety of New York civic affairs and was named "Man of the Year" in 1982 by the Flushing Council on Culture and the Arts.

CREDITS

CATALOGUE ARTICLE

The Mighty Fair by David Oats

(Excerpted from "The World in a Park. The History of Flushing Meadows", copyright 1985, Newhouse Press)

CATALOGUE ESSAY

The Fair That Never Knew Its Own Strength by Marc Solomon.

Marc Solomon has written for Channels of Communication magazine and he produced "Hindsight of the Future", a 60 minute video documentary on the New York World's Fair.

CATALOGUE POEM

The Promised Land of Mr Moses by Ogden Nash.

(From the N.Y. Times Magazine, April 19, 1964. copyright N.Y. Times.)

VIDEO

The Mighty Fair

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Hindsight Of The Future

(copyright 1984, Marc Solomon and Andrew Friedman)

To The Fair

(1964, Francis Thompson and Alexander Hammid)

VIDEO ASSISTANCE:

Bill Brent, Al Simon, Barbara Kuchuk, Philip Schiavo, Queens College

MUSIC

"There's A Great Big Beautiful Tomorrow"

by Richard B. and Robert M. Sherman

"It's a Small World" by Richard B. and Robert Sherman

(copyright 1964, Walt Disney Productions).

"Fair is Fair" by Richard Rogers

(copyright 1964, RCA Records).

"The Wayfarers At The World's Fair"

(copyright 1964, RCA Records).

"World's Fair Suite" by Ferde Grofe; Paul Lavalle

conducting the World's Fair Symphony Orchestra.
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EXHIBITION

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