

International Exhibitions | The official showcase of the nations

| International exhibitions and new urban architecture

“The expositions changed the medium through which Islamic architecture was introduced to the West from drawings and descriptions to actual buildings.” (Zeynep Çelik)

Architecture was a key component of the International Exhibitions, the grandeur of which had a significant effect on urban development. The Crystal Palace was an unprecedented innovation. Built in Hyde Park for the Great Exhibition in London in 1851, with the interior decorated by the designer-architect Owen Jones, the building was a triumph of steel-and-glass architecture that made a marked impact on the evolution of architectural style and building methods. The concept of erecting a single building was gradually abandoned: for the Paris Exhibition held in Paris in 1855 an entire complex of buildings was constructed. All host countries aspired to significant Exhibition architecture as a symbol of modernity and cosmopolitanism, and in many cases, the architecture has endured as a symbol of the city. Many of the buildings erected for Exhibitions drew inspiration from Islamic architecture; similarly, contact with the West through World's Fairs fostered the development of a “neo-Islamic” style in the Arab and Ottoman world.



Working Number: PD 051

Name: A view of the Crystal Palace

Holding Museum: -

Date: 1851

Materials: -

Curator
Justification: The Great Exhibition of the Works and Industry of all Nations, or the Great Exhibition of 1851, was a celebration of industrial design and technology. Held in Hyde Park, in Joseph Paxton's pre-fabricated cast-iron-and-glass construction, the essential structure was extraordinarily innovative for the time.



Working Number: UK 168

Name: Guernsey and Jersey, Malta and Ceylon (from Dickinson's Comprehensive Pictures of the Great Exhibition)

Holding Museum:

Date: The British Library

Materials: 1854 (publication of the book)

Curator

Justification: -
This painting of the interior of Crystal Palace is by Owen Jones. It shows how the Exhibition was on two levels, the upper floor hosting exhibitions about “all nations” separated by huge tapestries. Yellow, blue and red dominated the colour scheme used tastefully throughout in accordance with contemporary decorative taste.



Working Number: UK 152

Name: The Alhambra Court

Holding Museum: Victoria and Albert Museum

Date: 1854

Materials: Albumen print from collodion negative

Curator Justification: When the Great Exhibition closed on 11 October 1851 the Crystal Palace Company bought the structure and reconstructed it at huge expense at Sydenham. Philip Henry Delamotte photographed the reconstruction of the Crystal Palace between 1851 and 1854. He also took this picture of the "Alhambra Court" designed by Owen Jones and inspired by his extensive studies of the palace.



Working Number: UK 151

Name: The Nubian Court; Interior view of The Crystal Palace in Sydenham

Holding Museum: Victoria and Albert Museum

Date: c.1854

Materials: Lithograph, tinted with one tint stone

Curator Justification: The Crystal Palace constructed at Sydenham had an additional two storeys added to it; each "Court" of the new Great Exhibition would illustrate a particular period in history. To this end, Matthew Digby Wyatt and Owen Jones travelled the world making plaster casts of significant sculptures and monuments. This print shows the "Nubian Court" designed by Jones. The life-size replicas of Pharaohs and Sphinxes provide a sense of the building's scale.



Working Number: PT 032

Name: Crystal Palace in Oporto

Holding Museum: Soares dos Reis National Museum

Date: 1863

Materials: Watercolour on paper

Curator Justification: Palacio da Cristal, built a decade after its template in London, was designed by Thomas Dillen Jones for the International Exhibition held in Porto in 1865. By hosting this exhibition with around 3,000 international exhibitors, Portugal sought not only to keep pace with progress but also to promote its colonial empire.



Working Number: PD 044

Name: Trocadéro Palace Hall, Cross Section

Holding Museum: The Library of Congress

Date: 1882

Materials: -

Curator Justification: The original Trocadéro Palace, designed by architect Gabriel Daviaud and the engineer Jules Bourdais for the Universal Exhibition held in Paris in 1878, had a domed central body flanked by two wings and two square towers that resembled minarets of North African mosques. The new Trocadéro, which replaced the original building destroyed in 1937, was built in the Neoclassical style.



Working Number: PT 060

Name: Portuguese Industrial Exhibition on Avenida de Liberdade: View of the pavilion at the entrance to the exhibition

Holding Museum: Photography Archive, Lisbon City Council, CML

Date: 1888

Materials:

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Curator

Justification: The 19th-century World's Fairs signal the transnational networks between the European and the Arab worlds. In 1888, Lisbon, the capital of the Portuguese colonial empire, organised an Industrial Exhibition. This photo, depicting a group of people under the entrance arch, captures the event.



Working Number: PT 061

Name: Portuguese Industrial Exhibition, General view of Avenida de Liberdade

Holding Museum: Photography Archive, Lisbon City Council, CML

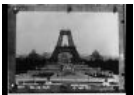
Date: 1888

Materials:

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Curator

Justification: In this general view of the Avenida da Liberdade (Avenue of Liberation) in Lisbon, the top of one of the pavilions built for the Exhibition of 1888 is visible. The image contextualizes the popularity of this exhibition showing the surrounding area populated by people, vehicles, trees and buildings.



Working Number: FR 125

Name: A retrospective: Preparations for the exhibition of 1889 - the Eiffel Tower under construction

Holding Museum: National Library of France

Date: 1936

Materials:

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Curator

Justification: On the occasion of the Exhibition held in Paris in 1889, France wanted to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the French Revolution and also her own savoir-faire and creativity. The Eiffel Tower, an audacious construction made of steel, has come to symbolise not only the Exhibition but the whole of Paris.



Working Number: PD 039

Name: Le Chateau d'eau and plaza, with Palace of Electricity, Universal Exposition, 1900, Paris, France

Holding Museum: The Library of Congress

Date: Between c. 1890 and c. 1900

Materials:

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Curator

Justification: The Palais de l'Électricité, designed by Eugène Hénard and Edmond Paulin, drew huge crowds to the Paris World's Fair of 1900. A huge

cistern powered the fountains of the façade; between the cascades allegorical statuary celebrated the Genius of Electricity. Inspiration came from Islamic sources, but the style was consistent with the new European fashion for Art Nouveau.



Working Number: PD 052

Name: The Palace of Illusions, Universal Exposition 1900

Holding Museum: Brown University Library

Date: -

Materials: -

Curator Justification: While the interior of the Palace of Electricity is typical of an industrial structure, it nonetheless reveals its derivation from the Great Mosque of Córdoba. The main room, known as the "Palace of Illusions" was furnished with a series of horseshoe arches, the mirror-covered surfaces of which reflected the light from the lamps, exalting the incredible possibilities of electrical power.



Working Number: IT2 001

Name: National Gallery of Modern Art in Rome

Holding Museum: -

Date: 1911

Materials: -

Curator Justification: The Fine Arts pavilion, built for the International Exhibition held in Rome in 1911, was intended to house the National Gallery of Modern Art permanently after the Exhibition closed. Designed by the architect Cesare Bazzani (1873#1939), the building presented an opportunity for significant expansion of the city to the north, on both banks of the Tiber.