



THE QUEENS MUSEUM NEW YORK WORLD'S FAIR ASSOCIATION

Fall 1989/Winter 1990

Issue No. 4

... WORLD'S FAIR ANNIVERSARY WEEKEND attracted over 3,300 visitors to The Queens Museum on April 29 and 30, 1989. Celebrating the Gold and Silver Anniversaries of the opening day ceremonies for 1939/40 and 1964/65 Fairs, inspired The Museum to present many special activities. Events ranged from Saturday's slate of speakers, at The New York Hall of Science, which included Ian Woodner, Max Abramovitz, Perry Rathbone and Joseph Ivanick from Raymond Lester Associates, to the ever popular bourse and film programs. Front page coverage in *The New York Times* Weekend Section heralded this rousing success and brought us many new faces!

'39

'64

Lots of World's Fair Activities

Your schedule will be jam-packed this fall with dates for World's Fair activities, which coincide with the exhibition, REMEMBERING THE FUTURE. All are free, unless otherwise indicated, with admission.

A five-part **LECTURE SERIES**, *Perspectives on the World of Tomorrow*, is organized in cooperation with the Museum of the City of New York, who open an exhibition on October 17, "Selling the World of Tomorrow" about the 1939/40 Fair. Lectures will be on alternating Sundays at the two museums. For each 2 PM lecture, a bus will leave at 1:15 PM sharp from either The Queens Museum or the Museum of the City of New York to take visitors to the lecture site. The museum hosting the lecture will provide a tour of their exhibition at 3 PM. Bus will depart at 4 PM to return to the initial museum. Passengers seated on a first-come, first-served basis. Entire day costs \$2 for members and \$5 for non-members.

The lectures are: **Oct. 1** - *Robert Moses and the 1939 & 1964 World's Fairs*, by Dr. Marc Miller, Curator, at The Queens Museum, with bus transportation from the Museum of the City of New York. **Oct. 22** - *Selling the World of Tomorrow: New York's 1939 World's Fair*, Bonnie Yochelson, Curator, at the Museum of the City of New York, with bus from The Queens Museum. **Oct. 29** - *Art of the '39 and '64 World's Fairs*, a slide lecture by Helen A. Harrison, Curator, Guild Hall Museum in East Hampton, NY, to be held at The Queens Museum with bus from Museum of the City of New York. **Nov. 12** - *N.Y. during the 1930's*, by Jack Salzman, Director of The Center of American Culture Studies, Columbia University, to be held at Museum of City of New York with bus from The Queens Museum. **Nov. 19** - *Futurism, Architecture, Interior Design: Commercial and Popular Taste*, a slide lecture by Rosemarie Haag Bletter, Architectural Historian and Professor, Graduate Center of C.U.N.Y., to be held at The Queens Museum with bus from Museum of the City of New York.

WALKING TOURS: On Sundays Oct. 1, 8 & 15 at 3 PM, meet in The Queens Museum Lobby Gallery to take a guided walking tour of sites of existing and former Fair attractions in the Park.

LIST OF ACTIVITIES CONTINUED INSIDE...



Queens Museum Curator, Marc Miller, examines memorabilia at World's Fair Anniversary Weekend Bourse.



Westinghouse Time Capsules provide remembrances of both New York Fairs. Photo: New York World's Fair 1964-65 Corporation; Rare Books and Manuscripts Division; The New York Public Library; Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundation.

Exhibition on 1964/65 Fair Opens

Just what World's Fair buffs have been waiting for...the first Museum exhibition highlighting the New York 1964/65 World's Fair: Called "Remembering the Future: The New York World's Fairs From 1939 to 1964," it opens September 16 and continues through December 31, 1989 at your favorite place for World's Fair activities, The Queens Museum.

The Museum is the ideal place to present this landmark exhibition because it is located in Flushing Meadow Park which was the site for both New York Fairs. Also, The Museum itself is housed in the New York City Building which was the Pavilion for "the big apple" at both Fairs.

The exhibition is divided into four sections: Introduction to the Fairs; the highlights of the 1939/40 Fair; the art, architecture, interior design and new technology at the 1964/65 Fair; and the legacy (arts and souvenirs) of the Fairs. Fair films and videos will be shown daily. The Queens Museum's own Ileen Sheppard, Director of Exhibitions, is Curator of this exhibition and assisting her is Dr. Marc Miller, Curator.

The first book ever written about the 1964/65 Fair is being published by Rizzoli International Publications Inc. in conjunction with The Queens Museum. See the order form in this issue for more details. *New York Newsday* is creating a special Sunday supplement to serve as the exhibition program. Copies will be available at The Museum.

Major funding for this exhibition is from *New York Newsday*. Additional funding is provided by the New York State Council on the Arts, Triborough Bridge and Tunnel Authority, David Rockefeller, York Ladder and Scaffold Inc., Electronic Industries Association, Formica Corporation and The Brooklyn Union Gas Company.

FAIR FEATURE

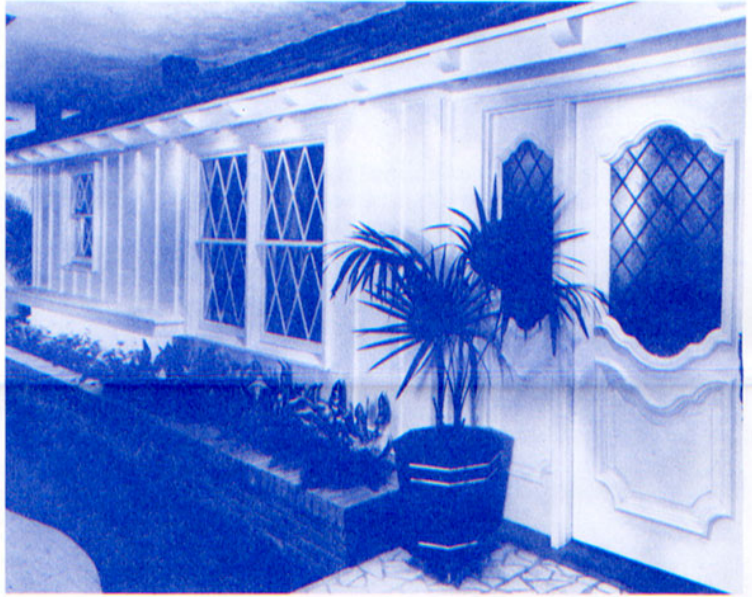
The Underground World Home

by Rosemarie Haag Bletter

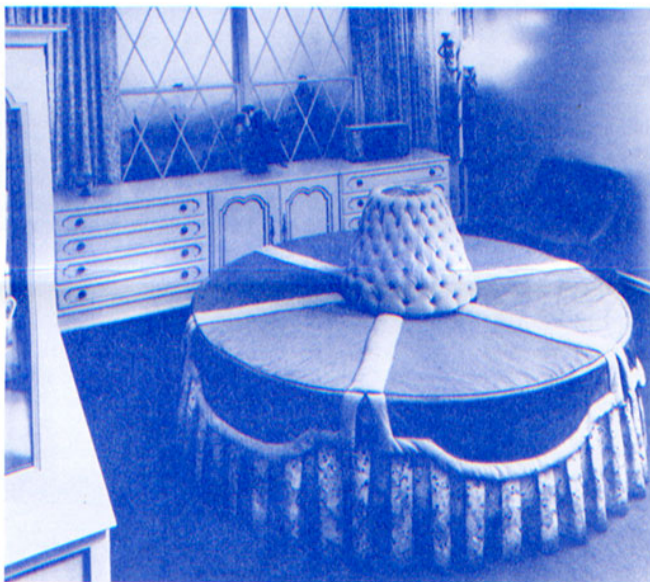
This article is excerpted from Ms. Bletter's essay in the exhibition catalogue, "Remembering the Future: The New York World's Fair From 1939 to 1964." See order form in this issue.

Though "the wonders of atomic energy" were alluded to in several of the Fair exhibits, a darker response to the fear of atomic energy also manifested itself in the design of the Underground World Home designed by the architects Billy J. Cox and Don L. Kittrell. *Progressive Architecture* noted that the Underground World Home was meant as protection against radiation fallout and more benign pollution such as pollen. The Underground World Home had been the idea of a Texas builder, Jay Swayze, president of the Underground World Home Corporation. He had been a contractor of luxury houses when the Cuban Missile Crisis occurred in 1962. The Plainview, Texas, City Council commissioned a fallout shelter from him to specifications by the Department of Civil Defense.

Swayze then developed a survey to find out how much value was placed on windows, and he found that the "average family prepares for work or school in the morning without glancing outside . . . and in the evening simply reverses this process." He observed that actual views were often uninspiring [showing other buildings or "dusty skies"]. Further, he noted, "we sleep one third of our lives with our eyes closed, seeing nothing at all." He concluded that psychologically, windows may be needed, but are in fact rarely looked at. "I decided an artist could do a thousand times better." Swayze did his first full-fledged underground house in 1962.



Front entrance of the Underground World Home at the 1964/65 Fair.
Photo courtesy of Peter M. Warner.



Bedroom of the Underground World Home at the 1964/65 Fair.
Photo courtesy of Peter M. Warner.

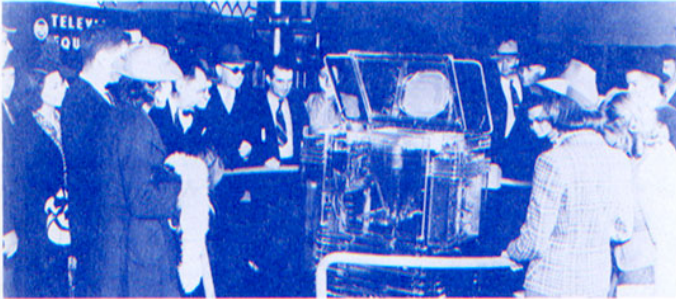
At the 1964 Fair, a somewhat smaller, traditional ranch-style version of Swayze's Underground House was put on display. It promised "Greater security – peace of mind – the ultimate in true privacy!" It was "landscaped" on all four sides with terraces, backlit fences, and murals of natural settings that were described as "hideous" by one critic. One of the books on the Underground World Home bookshelf was *The U.S. Air Force Report on the Ballistic Missile*. By the time Swayze wrote a book about his Underground House, *Underground Gardens and Homes: The Best of Two World's – Above and Below*, in 1980, the Cold War was over and his justification for going underground had become more ecological: underground houses preserve resources in a quickly expanding population. [He cited an 80-percent saving on heating and cooling costs.] In 1980 Swayze also proposed underground modular houses. He concluded that although most people love nature, they do not want to take care of it. In the Underground World Home, the lawn never needed to be mowed. Light in the simulated out-of-doors was completely controlled from rheostats in each room: "...enabling each occupant . . . to change the exterior light . . . Choices are: sunlight, light simulating a rainy day, moonlight, or no light at all."

Editor's Note: Ms. Bletter is an Architectural Historian and Professor at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York. On Sunday, November 19, 1989, at 2 PM in The Queens Museum Theatre, Ms. Bletter will present a slide lecture "Futurism, Architecture, Interior Design: Commercial and Popular Taste."

DID YOU KNOW?

At American World's Fairs, local business and industry played as important a role as foreign exhibitors. Many of America's best known corporations participated at both the New York World's Fair of 1939/40 and the 1964/65 Fair. Comparing pavilions created 25 years apart reveals telling changes about the changing times:

- One of the most important new inventions at the **1939/40** Fair could be seen at the RCA pavilion—Television. These first T.V.'s were crude and expensive. Mass production of T.V. was then delayed by the war. By the time of the 1964 Fair, T.V. had



Television at the 1939/40 R.C.A. Pavilion.
Photo: R.C.A., Collection of The Queens Museum.

- become an American staple. At RCA's **1964/65** pavilion there were color T.V.'s, miniature T.V.'s and displays that used new video cameras which allowed visitors to see themselves on TV, and more practically, helped parents identify lost children.



Visitors see themselves on color television at the 1964/65 R.C.A. Pavilion.
Photo: R.C.A., Collection of The Queens Museum.

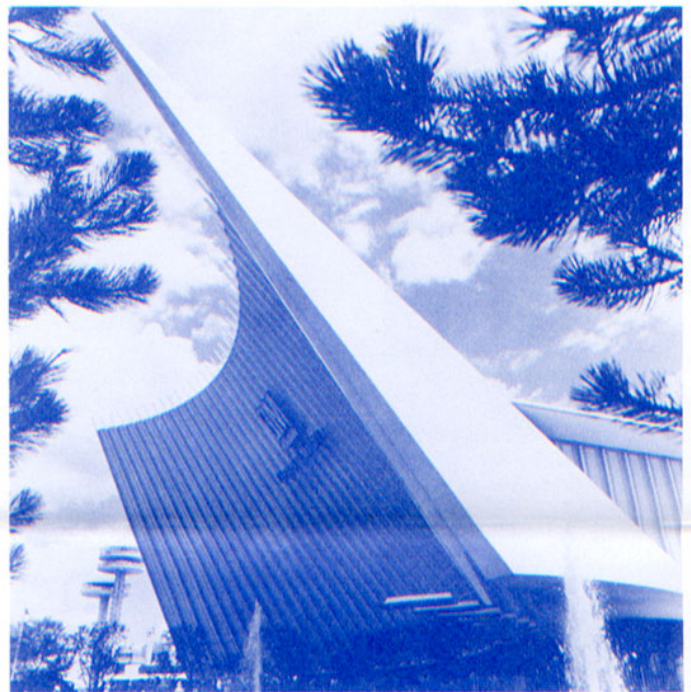
- At the **1939/40** Fair, IBM's display of electric writing machines and accounting devices that could read holes punched in cards, was modestly tucked away in the Business Systems and Insurance Building. In **1964/65**, the fast-growing corporation was one of the Fair's most conspicuous attractions, housed in

- its own pavilion, cleverly shaped like the typing ball of their new Selectric Typewriters. One display showed an experimental computer that could translate Russian into English. There was also an innovative multiscreen film that explained these new computers as it utilized innovative computer-controlled graphic effects.

- At the **1939/40** Fair, General Motor's "Futurama," a large scale model that showed how America would look in 25 years, was the most popular attraction. The model predicted a future molded by the automobile with super highways crossing the continent, connecting modern farm communities with futuristic high-rise cities surrounded by suburbs. In **1964/65**, General Motor's "Futurama II" was equally popular and once again, the most visited exhibit. Model tableaux predicted man's continuing conquest of his environment showing future communities overseas, in the frozen arctic, on arid deserts, in jungles, and ultimately, on the moon.



General Motors Pavilion at 1939/40 Fair. Photo: General Motors.



General Motors Pavilion at 1964/65 Fair. Photo: General Motors.

THE QUEENS MUSEUM

New York City Building
Flushing Meadow-Corona Park,
Flushing, New York 11368

Museum Hours: Tues- Fri. 10 - 5, Sat. & Sun. 12 - 5:30, Closed Monday

Recorded Information: (718) 592-5555 • Administrative Offices: (718) 592-2405

Free Parking

Letters to the Editors are welcome. We reserve the right to edit all submissions.

Editors: Connie M. Cullen, Marc Miller

Photos: Phyllis Bilick (unless otherwise credited)

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION The Queens Museum New York World's Fair Association

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

My check for \$25 is enclosed

Please make your check payable to:

The Queens Museum, N.Y.C. Building

Flushing Meadow-Corona Park, Flushing, NY 11368.

GETTING TO KNOW

A short history of "The Wonderful World of Chemistry"

by Michael Brown

MICHAEL BROWN created Du Pont's "Wonderful World of Chemistry" for the 1964/65 Fair. He is a composer, lyricist, writer, performer, producer and director who has provided shows for a wide range of corporate clients and for the theatre. See his performance on 9/24 at The Museum.

I had been doing shows from time to time for the Du Pont Company for roughly two years, when I was asked to submit ideas for their pavilion at the 1964/65 World's Fair. The aim was to put a good deal of information about chemistry into an hour-long presentation of a non-technical nature, using music, singing, dancing and humor.

I approached Du Pont with the idea to use live performers onstage interacting with life-size actors on film projected on screens that could move about the stage.

Linwood Dunn, winner of an Oscar for technical wizardry, worked with me to create a system under the floor of the stage which guided five separate screens, each seven feet high and three feet wide, in and out of the wings. To keep motion-picture images on them as they moved, since the projectors themselves had to remain stationary, required printing frames of film one-by-one on 70mm film stock, a long and expensive process.

At the Fair, the shape of the pavilion was a perfect circle, with one half divided into two theatres, known as the Blue and Gold, and



Michael Brown, Photo: John Suhay.

each seating 250 people. After seeing a half-hour, live-and-film musical show, both audiences moved into the other half of the circle, a single, large area known as the Red Room. There—on a stage with a striking background of great, bubbling chemical beakers, tubing and vials from Corning Glass—other companies of actors performed "chemical magic" based on ideas from Du Pont's Research Division.

The genie who made this part of the show work on a theatrical as well as practical level, was Dr. Jonathan Karas of Science House, an expert at devising scientific entertainments. Added features were an orchestra of live musicians accompanying each demonstration and a final visual effect by Bernard Block of Mobilcolor in which the walls of the room turned into what can only be likened to a Niagara Falls of simulated fire.

The show was presented seven days a week, 12 hours a day, totaling something like 15,000 times to an audience numbering millions during the run of the Fair. The operation budget for two years totaled \$2.8 million.

Would I do it all again? It may be surprising that the answer is no, even though I could not possibly have found a finer, more co-operative client than Du Pont. Only recently, have I come to understand what a tremendous responsibility and massive undertaking it was. But I was younger then and considerably braver.

COLLECTOR'S CORNER

The Queens Museum continues to expand its collection through both donations and purchases. Among our recent acquisitions are:

- Two watercolors by the architectural firm of Ackerman, Lowenfish and Van Pelt showing early schemes for the Community Art Center Building [later re-named the Contemporary Arts Building] at the 1939 World's Fair. [Purchase]
- Two examples of "Spin Art" done at the 1964/1965 Worlds Fair. Now a popular carnival artform, Spin Art was a new phenomenon in the early 60's. [Purchase]
- A large, three dimensional scale model showing the preliminary design for the Court of States at the 1939 World's Fair. Approximately 48 of these models were constructed and sent to all Governors to encourage each state to participate in the Fair. [Donated by Ed Orth]
- Approximately 820 color slides of the 1964/65 World's Fair taken by Joseph Leveck. One favorite sequence shows the formation of the giant 12 foot smoke rings at the General Cigar Building. [Donated by Joseph Leveck]
- Approximately 300 slides by Patrick J. Foy taken in 1963 and early 1964 showing the construction of Fair pavilions, Shea Stadium, the World's Fair Marina and the new roads around Flushing Meadow Park. [Donated by Patrick J. Foy].
- Approximately 100 pamphlets from the 1964/1965 Fair including an interesting ground plan for the Japanese Pavilion with a detailed list of the products on display. Among the innovations listed were SONY's new portable video recorders. [Donated by Mr. and Mrs. Irving Weinstein]



An embroidered purse, from 1939/40 World's Fair, showing the Trylon and Perisphere. [Donated by George & Mollie Wolfe World's Fair Fund.]

POSTMARKED: FLUSHING MEADOW

Letters to the Editors

For the longest time I have been meaning to thank you for a very joyful World's Fair Reunion Day (November 12, 1988). My little girl really appreciated seeing her old mom on the big screen (in "To The Fair"). Francis Thompson was as sweet and elegant as always. It is truly a pleasure to be surrounded by such fine quality people.



Margaret Whyte as Miss Johnson Wax.
Photo courtesy of Whyte.

I did find a snapshot from my days as "Miss Johnson Wax," shot on opening day with me "digging the dirt" at the Johnson Wax Pavilion. What a beautiful, hard-working, enjoyable, educational time we had as young people from all over the world working at the 1964-65 World's Fair. Margaret Whyte of Manhattan, N.Y.

Thank you for the nice presentation of the 1930-40 years of my collecting history. I'm afraid though I found some errors in the last issue... on the first page, left column, 2nd paragraph, the mistake is very serious. The opening day attendance on April 30, 1939 was not 600,000. The total was greatly exaggerated, inflated, magnified, puffed up, stacked. The paid attendance for April 30, 1939 was 198,791. Who discovered the grossly exaggerated attendance figures? - The Fair's auditing firm in early August 1939. Your researcher stopped at the May 1, 1939 issues of local New York newspapers which published the inflated figures unknowingly. The New York media was kind to the Fair when the truth became known, except for one afternoon newspaper which somehow had obtained the auditor's 67 day report and printed it in advance. Workmen trucked in during May & June '39 to finish up the incomplete exhibits are not visitors and are not Fair employees with passes either. And the 50,000 guests invited on April 30 were not paying customers either. Yet all these figures were stuffed into the National Cash Register estimates plus lots more "phantom" persons.

To forecast an attendance of one million on April 30, 1939 was the height of irresponsibility by the Fair staff. It caused many persons to stay away. When I was at the Fair on its last day in '40 an attendance of 538,000 persons created a walking problem - wall-to-wall people.

Ed Orth of Los Angeles, California

I assume from the flyer I received that some effort is being made to memorialize the 1939 Fair. I was there in the making of the Fair and enjoyed many happy times through its duration. Thanks to the Board of Design I was able to carry out eight mural contracts - more than any other mural painter in the world at the time.

The list included: the "lucite" acrylic mural for the Du Pont Pavilion, the mixed-media murals for the Venezuela Pavilion, the troweled cement mural for the Heinz Dome, the chlorinated rubber paint mural for the Fisheries Bldg, the carved lacquered linoleum mural for the Sports Bldg., carved lacquered linoleum murals at the entrance to the House of Jewels, the proscenium arch for the Ford Pavilion Theatre and the exterior mural for the entrance of the Hall of Fashion.

It was a very busy productive time with many interesting and memorable experiences. I have attended many World's Fairs here and abroad and can tell you that of all the World's Fairs, the 1939 New York World's Fair was the most effective, most impressive and truly meaningful of all! Not only because it was truly and comprehensively international and the best designed - it was, as a World's Fair should be, the most educational, inspiring and true forecaster of what was to come.

Domenico Mortellito of Wilmington, Delaware



View of Domenico Mortellito's mural on the Heinz pavilion in 1939.
Photo Collection of The Queens Museum.

WORLD'S FAIR ACTIVITIES CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

GUIDED TOURS FOR ADULTS: Hour-long tours for adult groups (minimum 10 to maximum 25 persons.) to visit the REMEMBERING THE FUTURE exhibition. \$3.00 per person includes admission and guide. On Tuesdays and Thursdays only, by reservation, call (718) 592-9700.

PHOTO CONTEST: Sun. Nov. 26, 1-3 PM - "I Remember The Fairs Day" Submit by Nov. 15, a copy of one photo of you and/or your family taken at the '39 or '64 Fairs. Photos **MUST** be titled and have a brief description on back **PLUS** your name, address and day & evening phone numbers. Photos become property of The Museum and will not be returned. All photos will be exhibited on Nov. 26th, prizes awarded and refreshments served. Wear your "vintage" '39 or '64 clothing.

WORLD'S FAIR BOURSE: Browse and buy memorabilia on Sat. Dec. 2 from 11 AM-5 PM at The New York Hall Of Science. World's Fair Associates preview bourse from 10-11 AM. Sponsored by The Queens Museum and organized by the World's Fair Collectors Society.

FILMS: on Saturdays at 2 PM. **World's Fair Themes:** 9/2, 9 & 23 - "The World of Tomorrow" & "The People Wall". **Social & Political Films 1958 - 1964:** 9/30 - "Dr. Strangelove;" 10/7 - "To Kill A Mockingbird;" 10/14 - "The Defiant Ones;" 10/21 - "A Raisin in the Sun;" 10/28 - "Odds Against Tomorrow;" **Social Documentaries:** 11/4 - "The Plow That Broke The Plains" & "The River;" 11/11 - "The City" & "Valley Town;" 11/18 - "Native Land;" 11/25 - "Conversations with Willard Van Dyke;" 12/2 - "Agee;" **World's Fair Themes:** 12/9 & 16 - Same as above. **Disney:** 12/23 & 30 - Disney Holiday Films.

SPECIAL EVENTS: on Sundays at 2 PM. **9/24 - The Making of the Wonderful World of Chemistry:** A song and slide program by Michael Brown about Du Pont's '64 Pavilion. **10/8 - A Magical 21st Century:** Space-age magic show. **10/15 - The Surprise Party:** Puppet show about super-heroes and space. **11/5 - The 3-D Show:** See 3-D images from science, art and the World's Fair. **12/10 - Fair Fashions and the Future:** Slide lecture by Harold Koda from the Fashion Institute of Technology on the impact of "Futurism" and space on fashions from 1939 to 1964. **12/17 - Imagination in Motion:** Innovative collection of theatrical sketches using sound, motion and audience participation.



SOUVENIR SHOP

MAIL ORDER: The first book written on the 1964 New York World's Fair. Essays by prominent Fair scholars. 208 pages and 225 photos with 50 in color: 8½" x 11" & Paperbound.

Name _____

Street Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Day Phone _____ Evening Phone: _____

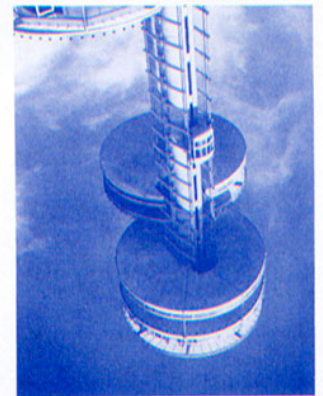
PRICE: Queens Mus. Members & Associates — In NYS: \$29.00, Out of NYS: \$27.50
 Non-Members — In NYS: \$32, Out of NYS: \$30.
 Includes applicable sales tax, postage and handling.

P.S. THE MUSEUM SHOP has two display cases of vintage World's Fair items!
 Visit us today!

*Left: Cover of "Remembering the Future: The New York World's Fair From 1939 to 1964."
 Photo: Rizzoli International.*

REMEMBERING THE FUTURE: THE NEW YORK WORLD'S FAIRS FROM 1939 TO 1964.
 SEPTEMBER 16 - DECEMBER 31, 1989

*Towers at 1964/65 New York State Pavilion.
 Photo: Anthony P. Marfisi*



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