What is an Exposition to an architect?

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Exposition and the architect


Exposition is an architectural form that has been explored for more than 200 years. Since its inception, the exposition has been a major theme in architecture. In the 19th century, the exposition was a way to display the latest technologies and innovations. In the 20th century, the exposition became a platform for international design and culture. Today, the exposition is a place for ideas to be exchanged and innovations to be tested.

Mies van der Rohe, German Pavilion, Barcelona International Exposition, 1929.

The architecture of the exposition is characterized by simplicity and clarity. The pavilions are typically rectangular and have a flat roof. The materials used are usually glass and steel, which allow for light and air to circulate freely. The design is focused on function, with minimal ornamentation.


The architecture of the exposition is also characterized by its flexibility. The pavilions are designed to be easily reconfigurable, allowing for a wide range of uses. This flexibility has made the exposition a popular choice for events such as trade shows, exhibitions, and conferences.

The architecture of the exposition has evolved over time, with new technologies and materials being incorporated into the design. However, the focus on simplicity, clarity, and functionality remains constant.
액스포 위장이보기

액스포는 건축가적으로 중요한 위치를 점하며, 역으로 우리는 액스포를 통해 건축가를 조명할 수 있다. 그럼에도 건축공학에서 전 액스포는 비판가ASH에 의해 유품사의 의견을 제시한다. 이른 시기에의 출판물과 지식의 실패에 액스포는 소장가한 가치를 확인할 수 없다. 이제 우리는 곧 액스포가 아니라라도 어떤 국가가 어떤 쪽을 성품에 대한 정보를 상당수 갖고 있다. 원어기 때문에 합성 정보를 접근할 수 있다. 건축가들을 통해 액스포 현장을 예상할 수 있고, 그런 인터넷과 소마이티의 에테른는 중대한 문제로 파악하기도 한다. 물론 캐노스 프리미엄이 비판의 대상으로 인한 것일지라도 훨씬 더 높은 "미국인들은 TV가 있기 때문에 문제가 필요하다고 말했다." 이것은 매체의 발전에 따라 공간 감정 인식이 변화한 단계가며, 레드헌터가 파하고 나무와 사라지는 것도 액스포의 유호성에 대한 의문은 가중한다. 특히 많은 방식의 아름다운 사례들을 규합하기 마련이 아닐 수 있다. 우리는 집진 거리도 알아서지 상대적으로 낮은 사례에 살고 있다. 작가가 요청하는 액스포는 개뇌하지 않아도, 국제액스포가구가 인정받던악한 각종 액스포와 비행기들이 남발해선가 난발 틀이라는 제안에 가까워져야 할 수 있는 가치를 넘는 사람들을 신화한다.

오늘날 액스포는 어떻게? 사람들은 전쟁 액스포가 내건 인류 공명의 가치에 관심을 두고 있지 않다. 아니면 실정이 대략적이고 이익을 위해 얻어진 기상의 스페셜티에 동원되고 있나. 액스포는 현재 경제 발전과 문화 교류, 상호 이용목적이 선호 목표가 있다. 그러한 목표가 잘 달성되길 바라며 열린다. 그럼에도 이 목표는 혹시 상업성이 사용한 현실에 비해 서서히 새로운 생태계에 포함되면서도 교묘한 자본주의의 시스템의 전략적 도구로 귀결된 것은 이질적일 수밖에 없다. 이런 현상은 우리가 이제까지의 무차별 결정으로부터 그룹의 하 getpid이라며 살아남지 못했다.

재팀하는 본질의 문제

안악 액스포의 현재 유효성이 상당 부분 감소했고, 그것이 근본적으로 정치적이고 상업적이러나면 건축가에게 어떤 여지는 있을까? 이러한 질문에는 최근 대두되는 액스포 건축과 관련된 이슈들. 예년의 "자유가능성과 연계된 전시의 재활용 문제"와 영국의 확장 때문에 건축가의 역량이 축소되는 문제들은 무익한 반면으로 보인다. 결국 중요한 것은 건축가 어떤것이, 건축가의 누구일까는 공급의 문제인 것이다. 건축이란 무엇인가? 건축주의 요구에 충분히 반응할 수 있음으로 변함이 일어나고 있다. 예기에는 놀라운 숭고한 건축이 존재한다. 자본주의의 메커니즘으로 극적화되는 현실 건축에는 전혀 해소 없이 보이지만, 건축의 촉각이 고고된 이후에도 계속될 수밖에 없고 그레이버이 하는 건축의 실현을 직조하다. 건축과는 변을 보면서는 필연적이며 비판적 자각적 능력에 조정해야 한다. 더 뚜렷하고 있는 현실에서는 주의적 대응이 필요하다. 현실 세계와 비판의 거리는 유지하면서 건축의 현실과 우려되지 않는 것, 이것이 현실에서 주장할 수 있는, 액스포 건축을 위해서도 무언 건축을 위해서도, 건축의 이론과 실형을 위한 가능한 모호하게도 확실한 답일 것이다.

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It has been already two years since the Shanghai Exposition craze of 2010 swept across Korea. Yet another exposition has now started before this craze has had a chance to recede, but this time it’s in Yeosu City, on Korean soil. As always, architecture is the tool by which we may actualise this type of visionary event into a tangible reality. Ever since the Age of the Enlightenment, the master conception of the architect was to imagine a utopian world, one which, in producing the blueprint for this rosy future, could attain its full potential at a large-scale national event like an exposition. When we look back, the history of modern architecture is aligned with that of the history of exposition. Even the often fleeting Pavilions play a decisive role in shaping the history of modern architecture.

The Significance of Expositions in the History of Architecture and the Korean Pavilion

We must concern ourselves with the years preceding World War Two. At the very first Exposition held in London in 1851, known as “The Great Exhibition”, the Crystal Palace became a showcase for monumental architecture. It stretched the possibilities of timely assembly and dismantling, experimented with the transparency of glass and, instated a new concept of space. The Great Exposition was a future-oriented event, as it responded actively to new technologies, an industrialised society, and discarded the arcane historicism of the past. The Crystal Palace was “a revolution in architecture from which a new style will date”. It was a good chance to witness the success of art nouveau as seen in the Paris Exposition of 1900. That was because this new style, containing the national characteristics of Belgium, spread throughout Europe labelled as Jugendstil or ‘Liberty Style’. The German Pavilion designed by Mies van der Rohe for the Barcelona Exposition in 1929 reached the apogee of modernist architecture, along with Le Corbusier’s Villa Savoye, which was completed around the same time. As a result of the convergence and refinement of all architectural experiments up to that point, it stimulated the spatial flow between the interior and exterior, achieved by an opening and closing of vertical and horizontal plates, glass windows and marble walls. In the Expositions of the 1930s, the continual spatial aggrandisement is made explicit in the idealised architectures of the modern era. The Finnish Pavilion designed by Alvar Aalto for the New York Exposition of 1933 is a good example. The curved walls inside the pavilion act like waves, combined with swift vertical lines, emphatic enough to visualise the forests, lakes and auroras of Finland. Pavilions in Expositions therefore became powerful stimuli in forming modern concept of architecture, a disposition which the inculcates its own solid reality and sense of interpretative direction.

Therefore, what is the relation between Expositions and Korean architecture? As Korea was slower in its modernisation when compared to an international standard, Korea was often represented by only a minor participant country, not even active in building a fully realised Pavilion. Since the country first participated in the famous exposition in Chicago of 1893, Korea’s participation in expositions can be divided into four discrete elements. The first: Korean Pavilions from the 1900s hold a particular significance in the country’s history, as the first introduction of Korean architecture to the modern western world. At that time, the biggest issue was representing Korea’s traditional architecture in the best possible light. The Korean Pavilion in the Chicago Exposition in 1893 was a very small, simple exhibit, sadly so dispersed as to even come under the banner of architecture. The design of the Pavilion for the Paris Exposition of 1900 did not develop much. Though larger in scale than the previous pavilion, it was a poor imitation made by a French architect of The Throne Hall in the Royal Palace. Ironically, it was only in 1910, when, annexed by the Japanese Empire and under Japanese rule, that Korea was able to show a meticulously well-built Korean traditional style main gate for the Korean Section in the Japan-British Exposition held that year. Secondly: the Korean Pavilion designed during the Japanese colonial era was used to justify colonial rule around the world. The Korean Pavilions were often adopted by the Japanese, according to their own taste and purpose, thus rendering aesthetic evaluation of the Pavilions themselves during this period as not far from futile. Thirdly: the Korean Pavilions betray a useful interpretation of our sense of Korean tradition, acting as a response to modernity by Korean architects following liberation from Japan. The Korean Pavilion at the New York Exposition of 1964, built by Joongup Kim (Korean architect, 1922-1988), is visibly influenced by Le Corbusier and Alvar Aalto; the roof of the annex building was intended to attain the harmony of tradition and the totallising strain of modernism. Furthermore, in the Montreal Exposition of 1967, Swoogeun Kim (Korean architect, 1931-1986) revolutionised the design of the Korean Pavilion, drawing upon impressive reinterpretation of traditional wooden structures. This ambitious motion made towards a possible future by the Korean Pavilion was, however, overshadowed by the neighbouring Geodesic Dome created by the irascible Richard Buckminster Fuller (1895-1983). A response to this may be found in the Osaka Exposition of 1970, at which Swoogeun Kim presented a high-tech Korean Pavilion, opportunistically joining the growing spread of techno-centric architecture, evoked primarily by the mercurial organicists of the Metabolist movement and the playful, pop-inspired work of Archigram. It is difficult, however, to evaluate the achievements made by the Korean Pavilions from the 1970s and 1980s, as the role of architects within society dramatically diminished throughout this period. And finally, one must consider the expositions, since 1993, arising from what is now characterised as the era of globalisation.
This was not without its problems; there were some significant shortcomings to the supposedly innovative technologies utilised in the Pavilions of Korean Government and major Korean companies. Not exactly at the forefront of technologically innovative design, it was only with the Korean presence at the Shanghai Exposition of 2010, that an architect Cho, Minsuk finally did the architectural status of the Korean Pavilion justice, by uniquely and inventively combining tesselations of slatted space and coloured signs. The architecture featured in expositions has a unique predisposition to design in its most progressive sense. In order to effect such paradigm shifts? in design and technology? the architecture featured must actively respond to its own sense of culture, grounded in its own values in order to accrue value.

The Other Side of the Exposition

Expositions occupy an important position in architectural history; they provide points of reference in time from which to discuss an evolving architecture. The significance of expositions in this modern world, however, should be questioned prior to considering their standing within architectural practice. It is true to say that the prestige of contemporary expositions is of less significance, when compared to the expositions of the Victorian period of early twentieth century, as a fall-out from our voluminous access to any form of knowledge and in the advent of new media. Our horizons have expanded: we have a considerable amount of knowledge of other countries, societies and religions, or indeed of the products produced, and not just through expositions. And we can access this information virtually, at any time, with the simple click of a mouse. We can even experience the expositions themselves through the television set or on the Internet; one of the smartest media moves is technology is the ability to recreate expositions in virtual reality. As Robert Venturi astutely argues, "Americans do not need piazza, since they should be at home watching television." This tongue-in-cheek assertion, though criticised by Kenneth Frampton, is a good example of the revolutions apparent in both the notion of spatial environment as concurrent with the notion of media advancement. We now live in a fragmented pluralistic world, how may this be conceived in the realm of an inclusive exposition? It is becoming much more difficult to gather people when considering global issue in such a top-down style. We now live in an age where even the intimacy of our own family meal is culturally expansive. Furthermore, there are simply too many expositions these days. An increasing variety of expositions, exposition-type conventions, and Biennales, many of which do not even need the official recognition of the Bureau International des Expositions, are relentless in their attempts to attract spectators. This sense of the spectacle is further aggravated by the underlying commercial and political aspects inherent to the event itself.

Therefore, we must once again pose a fundamental question. What is an exposition? According to the meaning of the word as given in the dictionary, an "exposition" propounds strong commercial elements through a focus upon exhibition, promotion, and the marketing of various products. As Yoshimi Shunya points out, expositions have always been driven by capitalism and imperialism; they are the hidden slogans behind discovery and invention. An expanding empire necessitates new markets, often mobilising its subjects towards this purpose, elevating the collective aim of the exposition. An elision of the individual thus takes place in favour of the cultural celebration and entertaining distraction of the festival for all. This is an optical illusion, although its degree of mollifying cultural sway may vary. This discrepancy may be observed in the late nineteenth century, in which the expositions of Chicago and Paris intended to cultivate a cosmopolitan inclusiveness by inviting Korea? a time at which the country was on the brink of colonisation by several major powers. The then Emperor of Korea resolved to participate in an attempt to placate the aggression that surrounded Korea at the time. Even more disturbing was the Japan-British Exposition of 1910, deftly regulated in order to eradicate the then image of Japan as a fiercely combative nation. During the Japanese colonisation of Korea, the far darker sides of expositions came to
light in a newspaper article. The following is a story that appeared on the third page of the Chosun Ilbo, dated from June 8th, 1929.

It’s an exposition! Many people believe it would be a disaster not to catch a glimpse of this event. Restaurants and small inns are multiplying in Seoul. It is also reported that all Kisaengs [Korean Geishas] from Pyeongyang are flooding into the city. All people of all classes are coming to Seoul, with every kind of business springing up to attract them? unfortunately even ranging to low-grade entertainment and prostitution. All people, whether they live in Seoul or not, are infected with the hype surrounding the exposition, as if it will change their lives. Some even sell all their possessions, even in some cases their daughters, in order to enjoy the exposition-craze.

It is deeply dispiriting to see the number of people who are lost to the money-making frenzy of the exposition and those who dream of suddenly becoming millionaires during this month-long event.

Are contemporary expositions like this? Are people really paying interest to the general well-being of mankind, as the supposed core code of expositions? Or are they simply being used as a virtual grooming exercise created to perpetuate political and commercial interests? Expositions certainly have a valuable common goal, in the enhancement of culture interaction, the encouragement of mutual understanding and interest, as well as the profitable attainment of economic growth. Of course these elements should be prized. It is deeply concerning, however, that expositions are manipulated as a strategic tool in order to implement an ever-penetrating form of capitalism into this world of extreme commercialism. We must, therefore, consider the darker side of such massive-scale events, that regional governments are now aggressively enforcing upon their own small towns.

Returning to the Essential Question: What is Architecture?

What possible exposition role may the architect take, when the aims of the event itself have devolved quite so superficially, that it all becomes a political and commercial game? The issues regarding expositions, such as the permanence of sustainability and the reuse of dismantled material, to the fading role of architects and the increasing of non-architectural, when posited alongside the consideration of the actual architecture on view, seem a merely peripheral. The ultimate question we must ask is what is architecture? And who are architects? Is design good enough if it fulfills the requests of clients? Or should it be as a messenger providing us with “news from nowhere,” even bypassing all practical issues? Or will it be better to put an emphasis upon the autonomy of architecture, simply satisfied by a “sublime uselessness” of “pure architecture without utopia”? There is a cyclical of logic regarding this matter. It seems that an architecture of reality, which falls into the category of capitalism, cannot give us much hope, but we should also accept that architecture has always been, and should continue to be, practiced after the “death of architecture” was pronounced.

Architects should always try to uphold their critical sense of identity, and start from the ground up. On the one hand, one must maintain a critical awareness of the actual environment, as well as ready to embrace the material realities of architecture on the other. This may be the vaguest conclusion, but also the most reliable point at which we find ourselves regarding architectural theories and practices, may they be for the exposition, or in their far wider applications.