

Queens Museum
New York City Building
Flushing Meadows Corona Park
Queens, NY 11368

QM Jerome Foundation Fellowship

QM-JEROME FOUNDATION FELLOWSHIP OPEN CALL **WORLD'S FAIR THEMES AND RESOURCE GUIDE**

(Click on links to skip to different sections)

- I. [OVERVIEW](#)
- II. [EXAMPLES OF WORLD'S FAIR THEMES](#)
- III. [FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS](#)
- IV. [INFORMATION SESSION](#)
- V. [RESOURCE GUIDE](#)

I. OVERVIEW

The 1964–1965 New York World’s Fair was themed “Peace Through Understanding.” The Unisphere, a 140-foot-high steel globe, was fabricated as the icon of the Fair—it visualized strides toward a more interconnected world, the excitement of the Space Race and scientific developments, and technical advances in engineering. The Unisphere remains in Flushing Meadows Corona Park, and on souvenirs that remain in circulation today, highlighting the Fair’s connection to new philosophies of mass media, distribution, and the individual-as-consumer.

The Fair also commemorated the 300th anniversary of New York City. The New York City Building (now the Queens Museum) hosted Robert Moses’ city-planning tool, [*The Panorama of the City of New York*](#). The model was a bird’s-eye-view of the largest city in the country, accompanied by information related to the city’s infrastructure, public services, innovations, culture, and resources. Even in the midst of profound social and political change brought on by the Civil Rights movement, the Environmentalist movement, and additional checks and balances on the City’s government, the New York City Pavilion glorified the transformations initiated and philosophy embodied by Moses, including discriminatory city planning practices such as “slum clearance” and “urban renewal.” Moses, president of the Fair, equated progress with efficiency, and happiness with the nuclear family’s access to the suburbs (via automobile) and expendable income.

As part of this Open Call, we invite reflection on the Fair’s histories in relation to the present. Applicants can use the pavilions, concepts debuted or embedded within the Fair, and legacy of the event as source material for a new proposal that expands their ongoing practice.

It may be worth considering, for example, how propaganda, corporate sponsorship, and empire-building fused to create a very specific type of “understanding” of complex concepts and distant cultures. The Fair’s celebration of the “founding” of New York City overlooked the forcible colonization of the Matinecock, Munsee Lenape, Lekawe, Canarsie, Wappinger and Schaghticoke tribes since 1624. The Museum acknowledges that the Fair prioritized the progress of white men and capitalism, while reinforcing global stereotypes of sexism and racism to benefit nation-building. What “peace” emerged, and for whom? Deeper analysis of the 1964-1965 New York World’s Fair offers an opportunity to interrogate the ideals, values, and politics of the mid-1960s and their effects on contemporary life. The Fair itself was a bellwether for the United States’ vision of progress, which remains tied to the pursuit of global power and boot-strap capitalism—a method that held particular favor in the first half of the twentieth century but has subsequently fueled economic and social inequality, disinvestment in public institutions, and a desire for new fiscal and cooperative models.

II. EXAMPLES OF WORLD'S FAIR THEMES

Below are additional examples of themes and subject-matter applicants may choose to address. We also invite applicants to think beyond these suggestions based on their interests, research, and observations.

- Globalism and/or capitalism as it was explored, imagined, praised, or prioritized at the 1964-1965 New York World's Fair
- The Fair as a private enterprise and the dawn of corporate culture
- Nationhood as defined or measured in relation to and specifically for a Western audience
- The “space race,” scientific advancement, and technological innovation as tied to international competition and ideals of “progress”
- Newly accessible resources related to technology, information, entertainment, and domestic products, and how they were marketed to audiences
- Race, gender, representation, and American identity at the Fair
- How was “progress” defined? For what purpose, through what means, and for whom?
- The pavilion as an exhibitionary form; how aesthetics and design can amplify a message, or how a gallery might reflect or become a “pavilion” in and of itself
- New York City infrastructure, urban planning, economies, and culture as presented at the Fair; how NYC served as a model for future cities, who they are for, and how they should function; the legacy of these projections
- Attractions and performance at the Fair; the role of parades and spectacle in relation to tourism and the experience economy
- The presentation of domestic spaces at the Fair; how the modern home was customized and defined a shift in societal structure (home as refuge, as laboratory, as private space, as defining of the people who occupy it, etc)

III. **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

A. Do I have to do additional research on the World's Fair to write my application?

No, you are welcome to do as much research as you feel comfortable. We welcome applications that consider one or more of the World's Fair themes that are listed above. You do not have to do additional research beyond the information shared here, as your project will not be judged upon how much contextual research you have accomplished.

B. Does my project have to include direct references to archival material/happenings at the World's Fair?

No, we're hoping that projects will critically engage with the legacy, residue, and consequences of the 1964-1965 New York World's Fair, and think about its relationship to society at-large. Your work does not have to narrativize the Fair, directly reference the Fair aesthetically, or contain archival materials.

C. I want to know more about the 1964–1965 World's Fair. How can I learn more?

More information about the 1964–1965 New York World's Fair can be found [here](#). We are also holding an [Information Session on July 20, 6–7:30pm](#), to specifically discuss the World's Fair context and answer questions related to the event. If you have specific questions in this regard that are not answered below, please add them to the [Google form here](#) or email exhibitions@queensmuseum.org in advance so we can address them on July 20.

D. Will I have access to the Queens Museum's Archives during my fellowship?

Yes! However, your project does not have to directly engage with the archive, or include materials from the archive.

E. What work is the Queens Museum doing to reconsider the role the building played in the 1964–1965 New York World's Fair?

The Queens Museum is using forthcoming exhibitions and public programs in 2025 to consider the interplay between city-planning and urban development in the first half of the twentieth century in NYC; and the Fair's vision of an "American city." Our building, which premiered *The Panorama of the City of New York*, emphasized New York City's abundance and history, speaking to a predominantly white middle class audience at the Fair. At QM, we're thinking about how the vision of urban development, progress, and optimism in the New York City Building may have played a role in the subsequent transformations NYC would undergo from the mid-1960s through the present. Through varied forthcoming projects, we plan to use *The Panorama* as a tool to review how changes in the landscape affected socio-political circumstances, resources, and the environment, and remain challenging for residents of NYC today.

F. What does QM seek to gain from focusing on the World's Fair for this fellowship?

The Queens Museum is dedicated to reconsidering the legacies of the World's Fair, and takes pride in offering space for contemporary interpretations of its legacy. In 2024–25, QM will celebrate the 60-year anniversary of the

Fair and is planning for an array of public programs to accompany archival and contemporary art exhibitions related to the event. We are using this anniversary as an opportunity to engage imaginative interpretations of the Fair, both for our audiences with a direct connection to the event and those who can only imagine the scale, innovation, and spectacle encountered at the Fair.

G. What is a World's Fair?

A World's Fair—also known as an expo, an exposition, or a universal exhibition—is a gathering of nations with the intention of sharing technology, culture, and information. An assortment of countries and municipalities, corporations, and religious sects build pavilions to host exhibitions, demonstrations, and performances for paying visitors. The first World's Fair held in New York City, the Exhibition of the Industry of All Nations, took place in 1853 at the Crystal Palace in what is now Bryant Park. The 1964–1965 New York World's Fair was not technically deemed an official “World's Expo” by the Bureau of International Expositions (BIE), which meant the World's Fair Corporation (presided over by Robert Moses) had to recruit participants for each pavilion and members of the BIE—including the Netherlands, Greece, France, Portugal, Italy, and the United Kingdom, among others—could not technically participate. This facilitated an obvious corporate presence and attracted younger nations seeking visibility on the global stage.

H. Do World's Fairs still exist today?

Yes, the 2021–2022 World Expo took place in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. The next World Expo will take place in Osaka, Japan, in 2025. More can be found on their [official website](#).

I. Why does QM have a collection dedicated to the New York Worlds' Fairs?

Flushing Meadows Corona Park was developed in the mid-1930s to host the 1939–1940 New York World's Fair. The New York City Building (now the Queens Museum) was erected for that first Fair on the premises, and is the only remaining building from the event. It was reused for the 1964–1965 New York World's Fair. QM holds archival materials related to the World's Fairs so local Queens residents, visitors to the park, and history buffs can engage with the context and significance of the Fairs for New York City and the world.

J. When did QM start collecting World's Fair items?

QM has collected World's Fair items since 1974, just two years after the Museum opened in 1972.

K. Is there a focus on these collections?

The World's Fair collection includes archival material from the 1939–1940 and the 1964–1965 World's Fairs. The majority of our collection consists of generous donations made by individuals who attended the Fairs, or their families. A significant portion of our three-dimensional items (souvenirs and branded content) can be found in our Visible Storage gallery at the Museum. In our Archive Center, we also house photographs (printed and transparencies), ephemera (pamphlets, brochures), textiles and clothing, toys, sound and video recordings, and artwork inspired by the Fairs.

L. How many items are in the collection?

Approximately 15,000 items.

M. What are some of the major threads for study apparent in the Collection?

We have a significant collection of photographs that were captured by visitors to the Fair. We have a significant number of souvenirs, postcards, and other ephemeral items that commemorated the event, providing a clear picture of the mighty advertising strategy of the Fair. We remain committed to amplifying our Collection's insight into specific pavilions by seeking out informational pamphlets and brochures that can provide deeper insight into the perspective shared with Fair audiences as it relates to the development and innovation of particular countries, American states, and corporations that participated in the Fair.

N. Are there other collections in NYC that consider the World's Fair?

Yes! For a full list, please follow [this link](#).

IV. INFORMATION SESSION

July 20, 2023, 6-7:30pm EST via Zoom

[Register here for the webinar](#)

We highly encourage applicants with 1964-1965 New York World's Fair-related questions to attend the first Information Session on **Thursday, July 20th** and submit their questions in advance. This will help QM staff to organize a presentation on the Fair and the Museum's archival collection that considers the interests of attendees.

Please submit your questions at least two days prior to the Information Session date via the [Google form here](#).

V. **RESOURCE GUIDE**

A. **Archival Resources beyond the Queens Museum**

1. Queens Public Library
 - [Collaborative archiving project with Queens Museum](#): includes photographs and documents
 - [Oral Histories](#) collected that relate to the World’s Fair via Queens Memory Project
2. New York Public Library
 - [Finding aid](#), New York World’s Fair Corporation donation
 - [Digital Assets](#) (92 total)
 - Varied NYWF photographs related to the World’s Fair: [Max Henry Hubacher](#)
 - [Robert Moses Papers](#): Moses’ collection of letters and memos related to the 1964 World’s Fair, but many other resources that have to do with NYC’s city planning between 1930 and 1968.
3. [Online resource \(SNACC Collective\)](#) relating collections with World’s Fair contents
4. Museum of the City of New York: [Photographs](#)
5. NYC Department of Records and Information Services: [List of World’s Fair-related collections](#)
6. JFK Library: [Digitized documents](#) related to the Federal funding and participation in the 1964 New York World’s Fair
7. Brooklyn Public Library: [“1964 New York World’s Fair” search results](#)

B. **Online Resources related to the 1964–1965 New York World’s Fair**

1. Photographs by Bill Cotter: [The 1964-1965 New York World's Fair](#)
 - There is also a more thorough [“Tour of the Fair”](#) that includes scanned documents and ephemera related to various pavilions.
2. Bill Young’s exhaustive website dedicated to the 1964-1965 New York World’s Fair: <http://www.nywf64.com/index.html>
 - This website also includes some ephemera from the event (pamphlets, maps, brochures) for further context.
 - On this website, each pavilion’s description in the Official Guide to the World’s Fair (1964 edition, 1965 edition) is available to read.
3. [Disney documents related to the World’s Fair](#)
 - This site includes brochures, plans, and correspondence related to the four pavilions Disney participated in creating.

C. Articles about the 1964–1965 New York World’s Fair

1. [1964: The New York World's Fair” - The Atlantic](#)
2. [“Revisit the 1964 World’s Fair in New York” - DesignBoom](#)
3. [“The Great Big, Beautiful Tomorrow” - Smithsonian Institute’s Air & Space Magazine](#)
4. [“Welcome to the Fair!” exhibition press release](#) (New York State Library)
5. [Search results on JSTOR for “1964 New York World’s Fair”](#)
6. [“A Gun to the Heart of the City” - Slate](#)
7. [“Gasopolis: From the 1939 to the 1964 New York World’s Fair” - Gotham Center for New York City](#)

D. Digital Media

1. [To the Fair!](#) (promotional video)
2. [“Highlights of the 1964 New York World’s Fair”](#)
3. [The Opening of the 1964 World’s Fair](#) (WNYC Audio Archive)
4. [“The Controversial History of the 1964 New York World’s Fair”](#)
5. [“Defunctland: History of the 1964 New York World’s Fair”](#)
6. [“After the Fair: The Legacy of the 1964 New York World’s Fair”](#)
7. World’s Fair artifact: [Science Service and Futurism at the New York World’s Fair”](#)
8. [Video tour of “Silicon City: Computer History Made in New York.”](#) New York Historical Society

E. Books

Throughout the application period, the Queens Museum will make a reference copy of these books available to applicants for browsing during [open hours](#). They will be located in the Information Station reading area on the second floor of the Museum. Unfortunately, copies will not be available for loan at the Museum, however, we encourage you to check out your local library branch! Questions about accessing the books or wondering which digital publications are available? Please email exhibitions@queensmuseum.org

1. [Official Guide New York World's Fair 1964 / 1965](#)
2. [Tomorrow-Land: The 1964-65 World's Fair and the Transformation of America](#) by Joseph Tirella
3. [Remembering the Future: The New York World's Fair from 1939 to 1964](#) by Robert Rosenblum
4. [The 1964-1965 New York World's Fair](#) by Bill Cotter
5. [The End of the Innocence: The 1964–1965 New York World’s Fair](#) by Lawrence Samuel