

Fragments of exhibitions

ON THE TRAIL OF INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITIONS

From the Trocadéro Gardens (16th district) to the Town Hall of the 12th district

Whether they were universal (1855, 1878, 1889, 1900) or international (1925 Exhibition of Decorative Arts, 1931 Colonial Exhibition, 1937 Exhibition of Art and Technology), these major exhibitions, which aroused the curiosity of the crowds and inspired the minds of the public, have entered our modern imaginations. It seems that the authorities regularly debated the future of the buildings after each event. It took almost fifty years for the Palais de l'Industrie, constructed for the 1855 Universal Exhibition, to be destroyed. The famous Gallery of Machines built by Ferdinand Dutert survived two exhibitions (1889, 1900) and was only destroyed in 1910. The City of Paris was particularly good at finding a use for its own constructions. One of the two pavilions occupied by the municipal services in 1889 was rebuilt at the end of Rue La Fontaine and housed part of the City's art collections for almost a century. The 1878 pavilion had a shorter lifespan. It was rebuilt on the side of the Palais de l'Industrie and was the main municipal exhibition gallery until it was demolished just before 1900. Therefore, it should not come as a surprise that several remnants of these fleeting décors are currently scattered around the city, even though we do not always know why they are there. Their presence is poignant yet necessary, as they invite us to reflect on the passage of time and remind us for an instant of the optimism they brought.



[enlarge and download the plan in pdf format \(402,9 Ko\)](#)

1

International Exhibition of Decorative Arts of 1925 Trocadéro Gardens (16th)

Carlo Sarrabezolles Pallas Athena

This resin reproduction of a sculpture by Sarrabezolles (1888-1971), the original of which was displayed by the artist at the International Exhibition of Decorative and Industrial Arts in 1925, was installed in the Trocadéro Gardens in 1988.

The work adorned the main façade of the pavilion of the DPLG Architects' Club, constructed by the architect Paul Tournon (1881-1964). The two men worked together several times throughout their careers, particularly in

1926 during the construction of Villemomble church, where the sculptor carved the monumental figures of the bell-tower into the fresh concrete, and then, in 1928, on Elisabethville church.

The Architects' Pavilion opened onto a garden courtyard through three arches of a very pure design adorned with an embossed décor. Pallas Athena was to the right side of this structure. Placed on a pedestal bearing the inscription "The Sacred Dance – to Pallas Athena through whom the gods vanquished the giants – to her imperious intelligence in her tasks", the work, which is filled with ancient art, shows all the artist's skills in expressing movement.



Universal Exhibition of 1878

In front of the Musée d'Orsay (7th district)

The Main Parts of the World

The allegorical figures representing the main parts of the world were placed in front of the Musée d'Orsay in 1986, thereby saving one of the best known series of the 1878 Universal Exhibition from oblivion.

The statues overhung the cascade of the former Palais du Trocadéro, which was demolished in 1935. They surrounded the gallery of honour, from where the foreign delegations discovered the panorama of the Exhibition. Europe (Alexandre Schoenewerk), Asia (Alexandre Falguière), Africa (Eugène Delaplanche) and North America (Ernest Hiolle) were installed at the front. Oceania (Mathurin Moreau) and South America (Aimé Millet) completed the programme at the rear.

A representation of the continents forming a procession to the sovereign or symbolising the triumph of Religion was one of the recurrent themes of decorative art from the Renaissance. The 19th century, more prosaically, made it the sign of the economic power of the States. Similar themes flourished after 1850 in the internal décor of the commodity markets, throughout Europe and on the continent of North America.



Universal Exhibition of 1900

Square Felix-Desruelle (6th)

The Sèvres portico

The colossal glazed stoneware portico was constructed to adorn the façade of the pavilion of the Sèvres pottery factory during the Universal Exhibition of 1900. It was designed by the architect Charles-Auguste Risler (1864-1937), who has been assisted by the sculptor Jules Coutan for the figurative décor and was one of the star attractions of the Exhibition.

Composed of an arc framed by pillars supporting a cornice decorated with garlands of fruits and flowers, the portico is topped with an entablature interspersed with panels of greenery produced from full paste. The window which was originally planned was replaced by a landscape against which was placed a medallion showing an allegory of ceramics.

Charles Risler, the architect of several Exhibition pavilions (Costume Palace, Bon Marché shop), was one of the main collaborators with the Sèvres pottery factory around 1900. He was particularly interested in the use of glazed stoneware in monumental construction, a material which was progressively becoming favoured over earthenware and enamelled terracotta for its resistance and durability.



Universal Exhibition of 1889

Square Paul-Langevin (5th)

Parts of decor of the façade

Embedded in the garden wall, three ceramic reliefs (one medallion bearing the name of Ingres and two panels decorated with garlands accompanied by the symbols of painting and architecture) come from the former Palais des Beaux-Arts constructed by the architect Jean-Camille Formigé (1845- 1926) for the Universal Exhibition of 1889. The building made brilliant use of the resources of metallic architecture. It seized the imagination of the public through the many nuances of its ceramic décor, most of which came from the manufacturer Emile Müller. Four monumental medallions, of which only the one bearing the name of Ingres has been conserved – were placed in the cornerpieces of the arches. On the others could be read the names of Labrousse, Rude and Delacroix. The commission for these figures of geniuses had been shared between the sculptors Louis-Oscar Roty and André-Joseph Allar. In the upper part, allegorical figures separated by garland designs, accompanied by the symbols of the different arts completed the decoration, whilst bringing to mind the intended use of the building.



Universal Exhibition of Decorative Arts of 1925
Town Hall in the 5th district - 21, Place du Panthéon (5th district)

The statues of the Cour des Métiers

Fourteen statues of workers which adorned the Cour des Métiers at the Exhibition of Decorative Arts of 1925 were installed in the Town Hall of the 5th district in 1930. Each one represents a different artistic trade: the Dressmaker (Marque), the Blacksmith (Dejean), the Carpenter (Traverse), the Glassworker (Wlérick), the Silversmith (Contesse), the Jeweller (Vigoureux), the Bookbinder (Cavaillon), the Upholsterer (Pommier), the Milliner (Arnold), the Stone-Cutter (Guénot), the Gardener (Niclausse), the Cabinetmaker (Drivier) and the Ceramic Artist (Halou).

The courtyard, designed by the architect Charles Plumet, occupied the end of the Esplanade des Invalides in the axis of the Lalique fountain. It consisted of a garden surrounded by porticos and containing a fountain, a sort of impluvium inspired by Roman atria. On the walls of the galleries, large panels commissioned from the painters Marret (The Road, The Transport, The Sport, The Architecture), Guillonnet (Costume, The Gardens, The Theatre) and Rapin (Teaching, Furniture) alternated with the statues, which were placed on large pedestals in narrow recesses.



Universal Exhibition of 1900
Square Scipion (5th district)

Alexandre Charpentier (1856-1909) The Bakers

This colossal bas-relief created by the sculptor Alexandre Charpentier and made of polychrome stoneware bricks by Emile Müller et Cie was presented to the ten-yearly Exhibition of Fine Arts during the Universal Exhibition of 1900. After being installed for a few years in the Square Laurent-Prache, next to Saint-Germain-des-Prés church (6th), it was then moved to the Square Scipion (5th). The relief, inspired in the artist by the famous Archers' Frieze discovered in Suse during excavations of Darius' Palace (Musée du Louvre), was a major work in the catalogue of this ceramicist who also specialised in reproducing masterpieces of ancient art. The experience he acquired in the use of stoneware pottery earned him the commission for the large Work frieze designed by the sculptor Anatole Guillot for the entrance to the Universal Exhibition of 1900. Ceramic stoneware was used in architectural décor later than enamelled terracotta, but rapidly became popular for outside uses due to its greater resistance.



Universal Exhibition of 1878
4, rue de la Pierre-Levée (11th)

Décor of façade of the former Loebnitz factory Four ceramic panels, representing Architecture, Sculpture, Painting and Pottery, decorate the base of the façade's bays. The building, constructed in the early 1880s by Paul Sédille (1836-1900), the architect of the Printemps shops, was until 1930 the workshop of the Jules Loebnitz factory.

Three of these panels come from the door to the Fine Arts Pavilion of the Universal Exhibition of 1878. This monumental entrance, designed by Paul Sédille, was made of coloured ceramic panels made by the manufacturer. The series, which constituted a sort of manifesto and was awarded a gold medal, opened the way to the use of polychrome ceramics in monumental décor. From the 1840s, Jules Loebnitz (1836-1895), an artist as well as a manufacturer – and as such highly representative of the development of 19th century craftsmanship of art – worked with the most famous architects of the period who all, from Duban and Viollet-le-Duc to Charles Garnier and Paul Sédille, were great advocates of polychrome architecture.



**International Exhibition of Arts and Technology of 1937
Reuilly Garden (12th)**

Charles Malfray (1887-1940) The Dance - René Chauvel (1886-1962) Amazon

In 1937, the lower squares of Modern Art Museums were redesigned, inspired by Roman villas. Placed on either side of a water mirror surrounded by a continuous stepped walkway, two rows of nude females placed on stone blocks matched each other on each side of the structure. Popineau (Spring), Saupique (Young Girl), Ozouf (The Awakening), Collamarini (Autumn) and Debarre (Provence) shared the commission for the western side, while Paul Simon (The Country), Chauvel (Amazon), Malfray (The Dance), Abbal (The Harvest) and Lejeune (Eve) created the statues located opposite them. This set of sculptures was taken down at the end of the exhibition and replaced by lead vases which have since been lost. The Harvest was moved to the provinces after the war and only The Dance by Malfray (undoubtedly the most interesting work in this commission due to its monumental size) and Amazon by Chauvel survived the unfair lack of interest in figurative sculpture between the wars. They were placed on the terrace of Reuilly Garden in 1990.



**International Colonial Exhibition of 1931
Town Hall of 12th district - Avenue Daumesnil (12th)**

The Overseas Room (former colonial room)

In 1935, the walls of the Overseas Room (salon des outremers – former colonial room) received a series of paintings from the Colonial Exhibition. Produced by two little-known painters, Louis Beaupuy (1896-1974) and René Durieux (1898-1952), the canvases were then reworked so that they fit with the architectural layout of the room.

The cycle shows a vivid panorama of the French Colonial Empire. Asia (Indochina), Africa (the Congo, Algeria, Morocco and Madagascar), Oceania (Tahiti) and the West Indies (Martinique) sit side by side in a perfect, serene vision. Both painters were members of the Colonial Society of French Artists. Thanks to two grants awarded by the Société, Louis Beaupuy visited Madagascar in 1931 and French Equatorial Africa in 1934. When he returned to France, he only created great historical paintings for the interior décor of Noyon Town Hall. René Durieux left Paris during the 1930s and lived mainly in Le Vaucluse, retiring to Crestet, where he filled the small streets with sculptures and gargoyles.

SEE ALSO :

