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World exhibitions

The search for a new identity

In the wake of the 1992 World Exhibition in Seville a balance sheet will have to be drawn up. Two main elements will be considered, both of which will influence the future structure of world exhibitions: the steady increase in the number of such events and the development of new exhibition concepts.

This will involve much extra work for the International Bureau of Expositions (see box) which is responsible for the success of these events, since the present situation contains a number of contradictions.

Valuable publicity

On the one hand a brake must be put on the increasingly rapid succession of exhibitions. Since governments think of these events as excellent publicity opportunities for investment, more and more countries want to host them – even

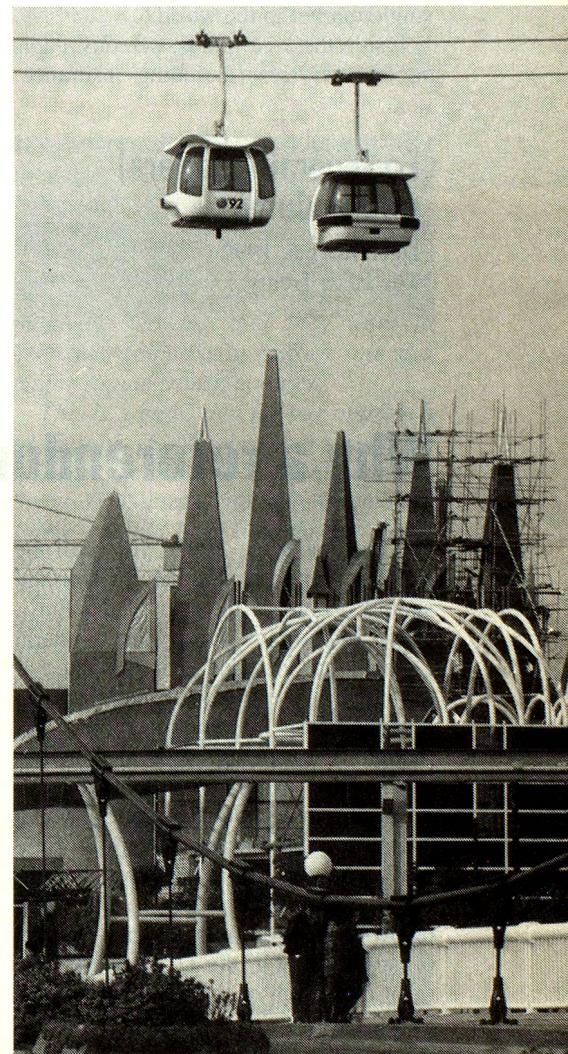
by endless video films and a whole armoury of slideshows, laser beams, films and holograms. In the midst of the cacophony of obsolescent multi-media demonstrations stood a few showcases containing illustrations expressing little or nothing. And that was it. In most cases the visitor was a mere onlooker and had no opportunity for any sort of physical contact with the exhibition.

A good choice

Against this background the originator of the Swiss pavilion's concept seems to have made the right choice.

By concentrating on art, artists and "the surprising side of Switzerland" stereotypes were avoided. And because of this there were suggestions that it might be taken as a model for future world exhibition pavilions – which was praise indeed!

Marco Domeniconi



Seville: the famous "Telpher" – otherwise few new ideas.
(Photo: Keystone)

World Exhibitions

Since 1931, there have been five universal exhibitions: Brussels (1935 and 1958), Montreal (1967), Osaka (1970) and Seville (1992).

Since 1980, there have been seven specialised exhibitions: Nashville (1982), New Orleans (1984), Tsukuba (1985), Vancouver (1986), Brisbane (1988), Osaka II (1990) and Genoa (1992).

The International Bureau of Exposition has authorised four other events to be held between now and the year 2000: Taejon/South Korea (1993), Budapest (1996), Lisbon (1998) and Hanover (2000).