



The Wolfsonian–FIU Presents *World's Fairs: Visions of Tomorrow*

Projecting the vision of a bright and modern future
On view May 30, 2025–February 22, 2026

MIAMI BEACH (May 15, 2025) — The Wolfsonian–FIU presents a new exhibition showcasing the wonders of 19th and 20th-century world's fairs—towering architecture and dazzling displays of the latest in technology, science, industry, and art—that promised fairgoers the hope of a better and more modern future. *World's Fairs: Visions of Tomorrow*, on view beginning May 30, is drawn from The Wolfsonian's vast holdings of world's fair materials and will be shown in dialogue with a video installation, debuting this fall, by contemporary artist Marco Brambilla.

Featuring nearly 80 Wolfsonian collection works—including posters, design drawings, photographs, ephemera, sculpture, souvenirs, and furniture—*World's Fairs: Visions of Tomorrow* spotlights the centerpiece pavilions, spellbinding attractions, and uplifting themes that drew millions to cities from Paris to Spokane, often offering reassurance and hope during times of crisis and change. The eight major international expositions included in the exhibition are: Paris 1889; Barcelona 1929; Chicago 1933–34; New York 1939–40; Brussels 1958; New York 1964–65; Montréal 1967; and Spokane 1974.

World's Fairs is curated by Wolfsonian chief curator Silvia Barisione and chief librarian Francis Xavier Luca. "As Osaka, Japan hosts the latest world's fair, Expo 2025, with its theme 'Designing Future Society for Our Lives' and a focus on developments in artificial intelligence, it seems only fitting that we open an exhibition

centered around the utopian visions of earlier expositions,” Luca said. “This show displays examples of some of the iconic futuristic structures of fairs—including the Eiffel Tower (Paris, 1889), the Trylon and Perisphere (New York, 1939–40) and the Atomium (Brussels, 1958)—in conversation with Marco Brambilla’s forthcoming video installation,” Barisione added.

Rounding out the robust materials on view will be a video gallery of historical clips from select fairs and a behind-the-scenes Marco Brambilla interview teasing his upcoming video installation. Object highlights include:

- The Glory of Iron | *La Gloire du fer* honors the physical labor that made fair construction possible. Sculptor Arthur Waagen depicts two workers building the Eiffel Tower, a familiar structure built for the 1889 Paris Exposition.
- RCA Victor | The *RCA Victor TRK 12* was one of America’s first consumer TVs. It is an example of innovative technology, now a household staple, that made its debut at a world’s fair.
- Chicago World’s Fair Poster | Promotional posters for world’s fairs often highlighted monumental attractions and reflected the latest design and architectural styles. This colorful Art Deco poster from the 1933–34 Chicago world’s fair depicts the massive Federal Building, with three pillars above a golden dome.
- Brussels Expo Guidebook | This official guide to Expo 58 showcases the importance of branding. It includes the Atomium, the central structure of the fair that reframed the atom as a symbol of new, peaceful possibilities for nuclear energy. Beside it is the fair’s logo, an off-center star designed by Belgian graphic designer Lucien de Roeck.

The exhibition leads up to *Marco Brambilla: After Utopia*, which imagines a virtual expo of iconic structures from fairs held across time and around the globe, including the fairs and structures contextualized in *World’s Fairs: Visions of Tomorrow*. Brambilla’s installation will be added to the exhibition for Miami Art Week 2025.

-FIU-

Image Credits

(Left to Right): Leaflet, *I Came. . I Saw. . I Was Amazed*, 1933. Servel Sales, Inc., Evansville, Indiana, publisher. The Wolfsonian–FIU, Gift of James and Martha Sweeny, XC2017.01.2.272; Poster, *Chicago World’s Fair: A Century of Progress, 1833–1933*, 1933. Weimer Pursell (American, 1906–1974), designer, Neely Printing Co., Chicago, printer. The Wolfsonian–FIU, The Mitchell Wolfson, Jr Collection, 85.4.91; Postcard, *Atomium*, 1958. Editions BEATIC, Brussels, publisher. The Wolfsonian–FIU, Gift of Michele Oka Doner, XC1994.4524.

Exhibition Credit

Made possible by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation.

About Marco Brambilla

Marco Brambilla is a Paris-based artist known for his elaborate re-contextualization of popular and found imagery, as well as his pioneering use of digital imaging technologies in video installation and art. Brambilla’s work has been internationally exhibited and is in the collection of the Museum of Modern Art and Guggenheim Museum in New York; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; ARCO Foundation, Madrid; and the Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, DC. Brambilla is a recipient of the Tiffany Comfort Foundation and Tiffany Colbert Foundation awards.

About The Wolfsonian–Florida International University

The Wolfsonian–FIU is a museum, library, and research center that uses objects to illustrate the persuasive power of art and design, to explore what it means to be modern, and to tell the story of social, political, and technological changes that have transformed our world. The collections comprise more than 200,000 items from the period 1850 to 1950—the height of the Industrial Revolution to the end of the Second World War—and include fine arts, decorative arts, graphic design, industrial design, architectural drawings, rare publications, and ephemera.

The Wolfsonian receives generous and ongoing support from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation; Miami-Dade County Department of Cultural Affairs and the Cultural Affairs Council, the Miami-Dade County Mayor and Board of County Commissioners; State of Florida, Department of State, Division of Cultural Affairs and the Florida Council on Arts and Culture; and City of Miami Beach, Cultural Affairs Program, Cultural Arts Council.

About FIU

Florida International University is a Top 50, preeminent public research university with 55,000 students from all 50 states and more than 140 countries, as well as an alumni network of more than 330,000. Located in the global city of Miami, the university offers more than 200 degree programs at the undergraduate, graduate and professional levels, including medicine and law. FIU faculty are leaders in their fields and include National Academy members, Fulbright Scholars, and MacArthur Genius Fellows. A Carnegie R1 institution, FIU drives impactful research in environmental resilience, health, and technology and innovation. Home to the Wall of Wind and Institute of Environment, FIU stands at the forefront of discovery and innovation. With a focus on student success, economic mobility and community engagement, FIU is redefining what it means to be a public research university.